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Published quarterly since 1932 by Phi Beta Kappa. *Publication Office:* Box 2-W, Richmond 5, Virginia. *Editorial and Circulation Offices:* 1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D. C. *Subscription Rates:* $1.00 a copy, $4.00 one year, $7.00 two years, $9.00 three years, foreign and Canadian—$.50 a year additional for postage. *Advertising Office:* 217 Canner Street, New Haven 11, Connecticut. *National Retail Distributor:* B. DeBoer, 102 Beverly Road, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

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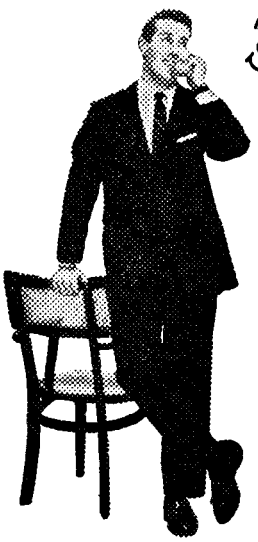

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

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THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR

VOLUME 25 *Spring, 1956* NUMBER 2

The Place of Thought in American Life

DANIEL J. BOORSTIN

NO ONE CAN STUDY THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT in Europe without taking account, at the outset, of two basic facts. First, there is the separation of the thought of the community into two streams: the stream of "high culture"—the thought, art and vocabulary of the aristocrats, priests, and all members of the privileged and ruling classes; and the stream of "popular culture"—the thought, art, customs, lore and folkways of the great mass of the people. The gulf is so deep and the separation so wide between the two in most European countries, and has been for most of their history, that the definition of what is being talked about offers no problem to the historian of European thought. He is talking about either the "thinking class" or the "working class." It is a truism that in many periods the aristocracy of France felt a closer fellowship with the aristocrats of Germany than with the peasants of their own country. The folk culture of the English people is at least as remote from that of its aristocratic and educated classes as the culture of England is different from that of France or Italy. When, for example, Sir Leslie Stephen wrote his *History of English Thought in the Eight-*

✪ DANIEL J. BOORSTIN, a member of the history faculty of the University of Chicago, has long been interested in the distinctive characteristics of American culture. His most recent book, *The Genius of American Politics*, describes the historical role of American political thought. This article is part of his three-volume history of American culture, the first volume of which will soon be published by Random House.

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eenth Century, it was perfectly obvious that he was writing about the ideas which filled the heads of that small fraction of the English population who were literate, educated and close to the seats of power.

Second—and this feature is closely connected with the first—the history of European thought (by which is usually meant the thought of the only "thinking" people, that is the aristocratic classes) is on the whole reducible to the history of systems and schools of thought. It is the history of "Thomism," "Rationalism," "Transcendentalism," et cetera—terms which to most of the people of those days were as foreign as another language. It is the history of the specialized architecture of philosophies, rather than of the general physiology of thinking. The grander, the more filigreed and intricate a system, supposedly the greater its claim to treatment in the history of thought. Those elegant intellectual chapels built by Thomas Aquinas and Immanuel Kant thus have become the destinations of the historians' pilgrimage. Scholars find them a welcome refuge from the confusion of the market place.

But it is misleading to take these characteristics of European thought as the starting points for an American history. Our society, unlike most other modern nations, has not been marked by the separation into high culture and popular culture; nor has our thinking been dominated by systems and schools. On the contrary, there have been a number of other large and persistent characteristics of the place of thought in American life. There are those which concern the *form* of American intellectual life, and those which concern the *substance* of our way of thinking.

I

Beginning with the form of our intellectual life, we find two important and apparently contradictory characteristics: first, its unity or homogeneity; and second, its diffuseness.

A. *The unity of American culture*

From one point of view the history of culture in the most developed European countries in modern times has been rather uni-

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form. For the growth of their liberal institutions has not removed their basic distinction between aristocratic culture and folk culture. What has happened is either that their aristocratic culture has been watered down piecemeal to make it more accessible and more palatable to the half-educated masses, or that a few places have been made available within the aristocracy for more talented and ambitious members of the lower classes ("the career open to talent"). A typical example of the first of these was the translation of the Greek and Latin classics into the vernacular languages, which was one of the major intellectual events of the European Renaissance. An example of the second was the growth of a system of scholarships which brought to Oxford and Cambridge some young men whose wealth and ancestry had not entitled them to that advantage. But the basic fact is that the modern intellectual and cultural life of the European community is still simply a modification and adaptation of the old aristocratic (high) culture to the sporadic demands of members of the rising classes. How little progress has yet been made is illustrated by the fact that throughout Western Europe (where alone true universities remain), with insignificant exceptions, a higher education is still the prerogative of the rich and the well-born; but the student population in American colleges and universities is currently over two million. To say the very least, the culture of modern Europe bears the birthmark of its aristocratic origin: it was made by and for the very few, though it may gradually, in some places and to some extent, have become available to a few more.

American culture is basically different from all this. In this, as in so many other ways, here is something new under the sun. With due allowance for the influence of the European doctrine and example, one must not fail to see the vast importance of the peculiar American situation. For ours is a modern culture which skipped the aristocratic phase. While having the literary and vernacular resources of the European Renaissance and the Reformation behind us, we started our culture with some semblance of wholeness and homogeneity. We have been without that deep bifurcation into high and low, which was the starting point of the national cultures of Western Europe.

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The student body of Harvard College in the seventeenth century was probably already more representative of the community at large than the universities of many European countries today. As Samuel Eliot Morison points out, in the earliest years of the College almost every Harvard student was the child of parents who actually farmed the soil, in addition to whatever else they did, and "it does seem that the College was fairly successful, after 1654, in recruiting boys of scholarly ambition from the plain people of New England." Part of the explanation of this phenomenon is found, for Massachusetts Bay at least, in the extraordinarily high proportion of university graduates to the whole population in those earliest years. But this was only one factor which happened to be important in that part of America. The more universal and characteristically American phenomenon was a homogeneity of thought and culture quite alien to the European experience. This was what Governor Thomas Hutchinson described, in the late eighteenth century, as the fact of "the generality of the colony being very near upon a level."

In Europe the progress of liberal and democratic movements has been measured by the extent to which they have broken down the barriers of the old aristocratic culture; anything which made the language and thought of the aristocracy available to more people was considered progressive. But in America the starting point has been the opposite: the unity of our society has been taken for granted. It is, rather, any failure to make culture available to all the people that has required justification.

While European liberals have tried to put the luxury of a classical education within the reach of members of the underprivileged classes, American democrats have attacked the very idea of a classical education because of its aristocratic overtones. Before the end of the eighteenth century, Benjamin Rush opposed the inclusion of Latin and Greek within the standard curriculum of a liberal education for the simple reason that these languages might be difficult for women to learn; and, he urged, nothing should be part of an American education which was not within the reach of all citizens. From the time of Rush and Jefferson to that of John Dewey, our educators have been primarily interested in what Rush called "the

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mode of education proper in a Republic." Thus, foreign travel and study in a foreign university, basic to the European aristocratic ideal of culture and congenial to the cosmopolitan and international allegiances of their educated classes, were urged by the arbiters of European culture, at least from the seventeenth century. But in 1798, Benjamin Rush asked (in words with which Jefferson would have agreed) that Americans be educated at home rather than in a foreign country. Only in the New World could the unique republican principles of American life be properly reinforced in the young, and only so could the equality of men and the unity of American culture be encouraged. "I conceive the education of our youth in this country to be particularly necessary in Pennsylvania," he wrote, "while our citizens are composed of the natives of so many different kingdoms in Europe. Our schools of learning, by producing one general, and uniform system of education, will render the mass of the people more homogeneous, and thereby fit them more easily for uniform and peaceable government." This desire for uniformity and homogeneity has had, of course, a profound effect on our conception of higher education, particularly in supporting movements to water it down and flatten its flavor to suit everybody's palate. Thus, a profound truth about our culture lurks in Bliss Perry's facetious suggestion that the ideal of American education could most easily be attained by awarding every American citizen the degree of bachelor of arts at birth. There is no denying that we started with the assumption that a society should have a single culture whose highest thoughts should be accessible to most men.

Even our geographic vastness and variety have contributed to this. Because differences of region and climate are so overwhelming, the differences of social classes in the several parts of the country have actually seemed less important. The American who goes to England, France or Italy cannot but note linguistic versatility as a mark of social caste; the upper classes not only speak their national language with an aristocratic accent, they actually speak several languages. In contrast to this, in the United States, of course, accent is a sign not of class but of regional origin. Even the regional dialects have been much less marked here than in other countries of comparable size. English travelers and American lexicographers noted

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this in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. "It is agreed," John Pickering observed in 1816, "that there is greater uniformity of dialect throughout the United States (in consequence of the frequent removals of people from one part of our country to another) than is to be found throughout England." On the whole, it is the members of our lower classes who tend to know another language—such as German or Italian or Yiddish—in addition to English. It is partly by losing their cosmopolitan character, by forgetting all languages other than English that people become homogenized into American culture. In the United States we all try to speak the same language, and only a few know more than one.

Our ideal of equality has carried with it the fact of universal literacy, and in this and other ways has contributed to the ideal of cultural unity. The Protestant tradition, our lack of ancient institutions and the absence of a professional class of articulators—a "learned" or "cultured" class—all these have played their part. Unprecedented technological development, taken together with natural wealth, a high standard of living and a domestic mass-market for all kinds of products, has produced a uniformity of standards of consumption and a homogeneity in the particular articles consumed. In America, brand names (with all they imply of universal familiarity with a single product, of homogeneity of product, and of potentially universal consumption of the same product) are symbols of the unity of our culture. A Ford car and a Bendix washer are owned by the chairman of the board of directors as well as by the night watchman. Finally, our yen for orthodoxy has encouraged people both to wish for and to believe in a unity in our ways of thinking and acting.

B. *The diffuseness of American intellectual life*

A feature complementary to the aristocratic starting point of European culture is the sharpness with which it is focused on one or a few centers. In modern Europe, the intellectual capital is almost as universal a phenomenon as the aristocracy. Almost every country has had its Paris, its mecca of culture, where one could sit and be at the center of things. One of Europe's main appeals to the American intellectual who has had even a taste of it is the ease with which

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the focus of intellectual influence and power can be discovered. The young American who goes to Oxford or Cambridge has the comfortable feeling of knowing—or being in a position to get to know—everybody who is anybody in English culture. The other day I talked with a young American student who had just returned from a couple of years in one of the English universities. Having been only another student in America, required to show what he could do in order to acquire a status, he had found himself suddenly offered a position of status and privilege simply because he was a student at Cambridge, England. "It's awfully comfortable," he said, "to be one of the ruling class." After such an experience, the young American cannot but feel a loss of privilege as well as a loss of bearings when, on return to the United States, he discovers that there is no such center.

Looking at our history as a whole, one sees a diffuseness and a shifting of intellectual life quite alien to the modes of culture in the great nations of Europe. True, different cities have had their days of glory: Boston, Philadelphia, Williamsburg, New York, Chicago and others. But none has had much more than a day. Our cultural center has been nowhere because it has been everywhere. We are almost alone among nations in having found it necessary and possible to create, *ad hoc*, a special city to serve as the national political capital; that city has never been our cultural capital. From time to time we have had something like an elite, a group which took to itself the privileges—and claimed the immunities—of the intellectual ruling classes of Europe. The most recent and most striking (and the most difficult for our intellectuals to forget) was the New Deal, when American intellectuals had a taste of that sense of power and of sitting at the center which has been familiar to those of Europe. But as Bernard De Voto has described under the useful title of "The Literary Fallacy," American history and American culture, even more than those of other countries, are imperfectly and partially estimated if literature is confused with life, if our society is judged by its literary product. For many reasons, then, American intellectual history can be neither the history of our intellectuals nor the story of our philosophies.

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II

Turning from the form of American intellectual life to the substance of our way of thinking, we find a number of equally striking characteristics. They describe the peculiar vitality and formlessness of our culture. The more rigid and dead the thought of a people, the more easily it is described and reduced to the systems which delight and comfort the academic mind. The more alive a culture and its ways of thought, the more elusive it is and the harder to capture it in systems and categories. The following characteristics are actually ways of describing the elusiveness of American culture.

A. *Interest in institutions rather than ideologies, in process rather than product*

Our most important and most representative thinkers have been more interested in institutions than in ideologies. For an ideology is something fixed and rigid: it is a posture of the truth which some men see in one age and which they seek to get other men to accept as the whole truth. But institutions live and grow and change. They have a life of their own as a philosophy cannot; and our major accomplishments have been in the realm of institutions rather than of thought.

At least since the eighteenth century, observers of our society have noted equality as a characteristic of American life. But it is the *fact* rather than the *theory* of equality which has flourished here. If European countries have been strong in theories of equality, as in other political theories, they have been feeble in developing equalitarian institutions. In the United States, on the contrary, where we have had unprecedented success in developing the institution of social equality, we have never been able to produce a pretty or an important theory about it. This is but an example, if one of the more spectacular, of how our talent for improving life has excelled our capacity for perfecting thought.

We have shown very little interest in producing things which would endure: monuments have not been in our line. We have been more concerned with whether an idea or a thing actually serves its purpose than whether it will continue to serve that pur-

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pose for a day or a century. We have been anxious not to freeze the categories of thought, for we are ready to believe that old purposes and old needs will be supplanted by new. In exhibiting his plant, an Italian businessman will show with pride the original workshop where his great-great-grandfather started and which is still in use; an American businessman points out with pride that not a brick of his original plant remains, that the old has been thoroughly replaced by superior modern materials.

Our lack of interest in systems of thought, in ideologies and philosophies, is but a particular illustration of our general lack of interest in perfecting the *product*. This goes with our special interest in improving the *process*. We have been more interested in how and whether things work than in how beautiful they can be in themselves. Our architecture has been concerned less with houses than with housing; our engineers, less with producing sturdy automobiles than with developing satisfactory transportation. We have been interested less in good food than in satisfactory diet. We have been worried less over the content of an education, the meaning of truth, knowledge and culture, than over understanding and improving the learning process. Our dramatic artists have been less anxious to produce rounded and enduring works of dramatic art than to provide moments and experiences of entertainment and amusement. The "movies"—from this point of view appropriately and significantly named—is the most characteristic of American art forms. It is an artistic object which from its very nature can never be grasped as a whole; the form is elusiveness itself. It cannot be held in the hand and examined for its perfection, like a play of Shakespeare or an oil painting. It can *only* be experienced; and its "meaning" is the accumulated sensation of many separate moments.

About a century ago, Sir Henry Maine made his famous suggestion that "the movement of the progressive societies has hitherto been a movement from Status to Contract." There is a great deal of truth in his observation, even when applied to American as contrasted with European society. But a more general principle, of which Maine's maxim is in this case but a corollary, is that the transit of civilization from Europe to America has been a movement from product to process, from art to institutions, from an interest

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in things to an interest in ways. The great wealth of America has actually had much to do with this. The abundance of our material resources has encouraged a wholesome unconcern for material things in themselves. We have been able to afford to experiment with the ways of doing a job without worrying about preserving any of the particular physical devices perfected for the purpose. If they no longer do, we throw them away and try others. Thus, our domestic architecture, unlike that of Europe, is not the production of inheritable estates, but the perfection of housing; our automobiles are not heirlooms (as they have become in England or in Italy), but transportation; our dress manufacturers, instead of producing garments which are beautiful and durable, aim to offer the wearer the sensation of being modish for a season.

Never has a people been more wasteful of the things of the earth, and never has that waste expressed greater contempt for the things of this world. America and Asia, as W. H. Auden observes, have in common the fact that they are built on waste: Asia on the waste of human life, America on the waste of material wealth. While scarcity has tempted people in Europe to treat physical means as if they were ends, to give them the reverence and the loving care which the objects of this world may not deserve, the people of the United States have tended to treat all means as expendable and have become preoccupied with getting the job done. In the secondhand-automobile market in Turin, Italy, when I went to sell a car which I had used for a year, the dealers felt its pulse, listened to its cough, and pityingly, almost tenderly, remarked that it was *stanca*—"tired." When in Chicago I took my used car to such a market, the dealer looked hastily at his handbook, rather than the car, told me what a machine of that vintage was worth, and turned quickly to persuade me of the superior operating advantages of a new model. The printed word, in the form in which it reaches most people here, aims less to be a rounded literary product than a means of entertainment, of topical and relevant instruction, of information on the qualities and prices of all the other available means of living.

In this sense—contrary to current clichés about us—our willingness to waste things has expressed our unconcern for the things of life and our greater interest in the ways of life. Our distinctive in-

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terest in process has been expressed in myriad aspects of American culture which have enabled us to see through the object to the objective; to view art not as the perfection of artistic objects, but as a kind of experience; to see religiosity expressed not in the construction of religious monuments and churches, but in a "religious experience" for which the church building is only a more or less effective instrument.

In the realm of material things, all this has been encouraged basically by our great material wealth with all it has meant in the way of an indefinitely expandable market and a continuing demand for better ways of doing all sorts of things. The distinction here is crucial. We must not consider the growing demand for air conditioners in middle-class homes as just a simple expression of materialism and greed for more things of this world. It is more precise to recognize this as but another illustration of our passionate preference for the experience of being cool in summer and for being comfortable in many other ways.

In the realm of ideas, this frame of mind has carried a distinctive lack of interest in the form of thought, a cavalier indifference to whether our thought is consistent and systematic. We are immensely interested in ideas when they wear work clothes, when they are embodied in institutions. Even then we are less interested in how they look than in how they work. We are less interested in how they sound in the salon or from the lecture platform than in how they function in the market place.

B. *The success criterion*

The intellectual landscape of contemporary Europe is haunted by the ghosts of lost causes. There is hardly a movement in the checkered history of a European nation which does not have its active partisans today. A catalogue of living philosophies in Italy now is an index to Italian history. In those more metaphysically minded countries, which have possessed dominant intellectual classes, political parties are ideological. Philosophers classify themselves as disciples of dead centuries. And all intellectual life becomes a museum of past ideologies. Where ways of thought are judged by their intellectual consistency and by their aesthetic ap-

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peal, by their appeal to a distinctively intellectual ruling class rather than by their ability to become embodied in institutions, the intellectual life of the community becomes one with the speculations of its visionaries and the vagaries of its metaphysicians. And this is true in most of the countries of Europe.

But in the United States, almost from the beginning, our ideas have been tested by their ability to become embodied in institutions. Puritanism was to prove itself in Zion; Quakerism in a City of Brotherly Love. Where success is a test of truth, men lose interest in lost causes. They cannot be excited by ideas or philosophic systems (however symmetrical or well constructed or well argued) which do not still give promise of being put into practice. The feasibility of a philosophy becomes one with its validity. The intellectual vision of the community becomes confined by the limits of the practical. This may bound the speculative life, but it has its advantages.

Defeat and oblivion become a single fate. Somehow, systems of thought seem to lose their immortality; if only once proved unworkable, they die. Thus, intellectual life in the United States at any moment is both more and less cumulative than elsewhere. For our history is a process of elimination which has disposed of irrelevant ideas; and the living ideas at any particular time are all those remaining ideas with some reasonable prospect of adoption. If our intellectual life is a less rich museum for philosophers, it may be a richer tool house for cultivating our garden.

C. *The importance of context: the implicitness of ideas*

Never before was a culture so much nourished on the belief that values grow from the context, that the appropriate way of thinking grows out of the particular style of living. "We ever held it certain," declared Cabeza de Vaca in 1535, "that going toward the sunset we would find what we desired." The Puritans, too, believed that Westward the course of the Gospel would have its way: following Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24:27, they were confident that, as the light of the Gospel had formerly shone out of the East, so now it would shine out of the West. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—from Crèvecoeur's notion that America had produced a

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new man, through Jefferson's belief in the wealth, promise and magnificence of the continent, and Turner's faith in a frontier-born culture and frontier-nourished institutions—runs the refrain that American values spring from the circumstances of the New World, that these are the secret of the "American Way of Life." This has been both an example of our special way of dealing with ideas and an encouragement to it. For lack of a better word, we may call this a leaning toward *implicitness,* a tendency to leave ideas embodied in experience and a belief that the truth somehow arises out of the experience.

This carries with it a preference for the relevance of ideas as against their form and a surprising unconcern for the separability of ideas. We have seldom believed that the validity of an idea was tested by its capacity for being expressed in words. The beliefs that values come out of the context and that truth is part of the matrix of experience (and hardly separable from it) become themselves part of the way of American thinking—hence, the formlessness of American thought, its lack of treatises, schools and systems.

D. *The nirvana of success: self-annihilation through mastery and adaptation*

All this has produced a quaint inversion of the Buddhist approach to life, or rather something like an American notion of Nirvana. For the Buddhist, bliss is attained by the loss of personal identity, by being absorbed into the universal oneness and nothingness. His self-annihilation is arrived at by transcending the physical environment, by rising above wind and rain, hunger, life and death. The characteristic notion of bliss developed on the American continent involves a comparable process of absorption and loss of identity. But here that oneness is attained by a complete adaptation to the environment which involves seizing the opportunities which it offers, by "fitting in." The objective is an almost mystic and naïvely sensed accord with everything about one. The oblivion of Nirvana and the oblivion of success have much in common. In both, the individual transcends his own personality to become part of what surrounds him. The desire to master the forces of nature, to wrest from the environment all the wealth it holds, to find all possible

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uses of every material—this has carried with it a willingness to adapt to the social situation, to make the social norm not the fulfillment of some preconceived, philosophy-sharpened ideal, but the fulfillment of the possibilities in the situation, the attainment of compromise. So, for the American, it is not Nirvana, but Rotariana.

E. *Continuity and conservatism of ways of thought*

Perhaps never before has there been a society with such remarkable continuity in its ways of thought even from the time of its first settlement. The success criterion, the implicitness, the concern for institutions—all these have prevented abrupt breaks in the direction of our thought. For the chain of circumstances is not casually broken as the chain of ideas can be. A philosopher in his study can think up a new and sometimes attractive frame of ideas; he can propose an anarchy, a revolution or a new beginning; he is free as the air. But circumstances hold within them certain limits; every event somehow grows out of its predecessors. And American empiricism has tied our thinking to the slow, organic growth of institutions. By rejecting ideologies, we reject the sharp angles, the sudden turns, the steep up-and-down grades, which mark political life in many parts of the world, in favor of the slow curves, the imperceptible slopes of institutional life. If ever the circumstances of a culture have suited a people to think "institutionally," American history has done so. For us, fortunately, it is impossible to distinguish the history of our thought from the history of our institutions.

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The Judgment of the Birds

LOREN C. EISELEY

IT IS A COMMONPLACE OF ALL RELIGIOUS THOUGHT, even the most primitive, that the man seeking visions and insight must go apart from his fellows and live for a time in the wilderness. If he is of the proper sort, he will return with a message. It may not be a message from the god he set out to seek, but even if he has failed in that particular, he will have had a vision or seen a marvel—and these are always worth listening to and thinking about.

The world, I have come to believe, is a very queer place, but we have been part of this queerness for so long that we tend to take it for granted. We rush to and fro like mad hatters upon our peculiar errands, all the time imagining our surroundings to be dull and ourselves quite ordinary creatures. Actually, there is nothing in the world to encourage this idea, but such is the mind of man, and this is why he finds it necessary from time to time to send emissaries into the wilderness in the hope of learning of great events or plans in store for him that will resuscitate his waning taste for life. His vast news services, his world-wide radio network, he knows with a last remnant of healthy distrust, will be of no use to him in this matter. No miracle can withstand a radio broadcast, and it is certain that it would be no miracle if it could. One must seek, then, what only the solitary approach can give—a natural revelation.

Let it be understood at the outset that I am not the sort of man to whom is entrusted direct knowledge of great events or prophecies. A naturalist, however, spends much of his life alone, and my life is no exception. Even in New York City there are patches of wilderness, and a man by himself is bound to undergo certain ex-

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periences falling into the class of which I speak. I set mine down, therefore: a matter of pigeons, a flight of chemicals, and a judgment of birds, in the hope that they will come to the eye of those who have retained a true taste for the marvelous and who are capable of discerning in the flow of ordinary events the point at which the mundane world gives way to quite another dimension.

New York is not, on the whole, the best place to enjoy the downright miraculous nature of the planet. There are, I do not doubt, many remarkable stories to be heard there and many strange sights to be seen, but to grasp a marvel fully, it must be savored from all aspects. This cannot be done while one is being jostled and hustled along a crowded street. Nevertheless, in any city there are true wildernesses in which a man can be alone, and the marvel can happen in a hotel room or on the high roofs at dawn.

One night, on the twentieth floor of a midtown hotel, I awoke in the dark and grew restless. On an impulse I climbed upon the broad old-fashioned window sill, opened the curtains and peered out. It was the hour just before dawn, the hour when men sigh in their sleep or, if awake, strive to focus their wavering eyesight upon a world dissolving into shadows. I leaned out sleepily through the open window. I had expected depths, but not the sight I saw.

I found I was looking down from that great height into a series of curious cupolas or lofts that I could just barely make out in the darkness. As I looked, the outlines of these lofts became more distinct because the light was being reflected from the wings of pigeons who, in utter silence, were beginning to float outward upon the city. In and out through the open slits in the cupolas passed the white-winged birds on their mysterious errands. At this hour the city was theirs, and quietly, without the brush of a single wing tip against stone in that high, eerie place, they were taking over the spires of Manhattan. They were pouring upward in a light that was not yet perceptible to human eyes, while far down in the black darkness of the alleys it was still midnight.

As I crouched half-asleep across the sill, I had a moment's illusion that the world had changed in the night, as in some immense snowfall, and that if I were to leave, it would have to be as these other inhabitants were doing—by the window. I should have to launch

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out into that great, bottomless void with the simple confidence of young birds reared high up there among the familiar chimney pots and interposed horrors of the abyss.

I leaned farther out. To and fro went the white wings, to and fro. There was no sound from any of them. Man was asleep and this light for a little while was theirs. Or perhaps I had dreamed about man in this city of wings—which he could surely never have built. Perhaps I, myself, was one of these birds dreaming unpleasantly for a moment of old dangers far below as I teetered on a window ledge.

Around and around went the wings. It needed only a little courage, only a little shove from the window ledge to enter that city of light. The muscles of my hands were already making little premonitory lunges. I wanted to enter that city and go away over the roofs in the first dawn. I wanted to enter it so badly that I drew back carefully into the room and opened the hall door. I found my coat on the chair, and it slowly became clear to me that there was a way down through the floors, that I was, after all, only a man.

I dressed then and went back to my own kind, and I have been rather more than usually careful ever since not to look into the city of light. I had seen, just once, man's greatest creation from a strange inverted angle, and it was not really his at all. I will never forget how those wings went round and round, and how, by the merest pressure of the fingers and a feeling for air, one might go away over the roofs. It is a knowledge, however, that is better kept to oneself. I think of it sometimes in such a way that the wings, beginning far down in the black depths of the mind, begin to rise and whirl till all the mind is lit by their spinning and there is a sense of things passing away, but lightly, as a wing might veer over an obstacle.

To see from an inverted angle, however, is not a gift allotted merely to the human imagination. I have come to suspect that it is shared by animals, though perhaps as rarely as among men. The time has to be right; one has to be, by chance or intention, upon the border of two worlds. And sometimes these two borders may shift or interpenetrate and one sees the miraculous.

I once saw this happen to a crow.

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This crow lives near my house, and though I have never injured him, he takes good care to stay up in the very highest trees and, in general, to avoid humanity. His world begins at about the limit of my eyesight.

On the particular morning when this episode occurred, the whole countryside was buried in one of the thickest fogs in years. The ceiling was absolutely zero. All planes were grounded, and even a pedestrian could hardly see his outstretched hand before him.

I was groping across a field in the general direction of the railroad station, following a dimly outlined path. Suddenly out of the fog, at about the level of my eyes, and so closely that I flinched, there flashed a pair of immense black wings and a huge beak. The whole bird rushed over my head with a frantic cawing outcry of hideous terror such as I have never heard in a crow's voice before, and never expect to hear again.

He was lost and startled, I thought, as I recovered my poise. He ought not to have flown out in this fog. He'd knock his silly brains out.

All afternoon that great awkward cry rang in my head. Merely being lost in a fog seemed scarcely to account for it—especially in a tough, intelligent old bandit such as I knew that particular crow to be. I even looked once in the mirror to see what it might be about me that had so revolted him that he had cried out in protest to the very stones.

Finally, as I worked my way homeward along the path, the solution came to me. It should have been clear before. The borders of our worlds had shifted. It was the fog that had done it. That crow, and I knew him well, never under normal circumstances flew low near men. He had been lost all right, but it was more than that. He thought he had been high up, and when he encountered me looming gigantically through the fog, he had perceived a ghastly and, to the crow mind, unnatural sight. He had seen a man walking on air, desecrating the very heart of the crow kingdom, a harbinger of the most profound evil a crow mind could conceive of—air-walking men. The encounter, he must have thought, had taken place a hundred feet over the roofs.

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He caws now when he sees me leaving for the station in the morning, and I fancy that in that note I catch the uncertainty of a mind that has come to know things are not always what they seem. He has seen a marvel in his heights of air and is no longer as other crows. He has experienced the human world from an unlikely perspective. He and I share a viewpoint in common: our worlds have interpenetrated, and we both have faith in the miraculous.

It is a faith that in my own case has been augmented by two remarkable sights. As I have hinted previously, I once saw some very odd chemicals fly across a waste so dead it might have been upon the moon, and once, by an even more fantastic piece of luck, I was present when a group of birds passed a judgment upon life.

On the maps of the old voyagers it is called *Mauvaises Terres*, the "evil lands," and, slurred a little with the passage through many minds, it has come down to us anglicized as the "Badlands." The soft rustling of moccasins has passed through its canyons on the grim business of war and flight, but the last of those slight disturbances of immemorial silences died out almost a century ago. The land, if one can call it a land, is a waste as lifeless as that valley in which lie the kings of Egypt. Like the Valley of the Kings, it is a mausoleum, a place of dry bones in what once was a place of life. Now it has silences as tangible as those in the moon's airless chasms.

Nothing grows among its pinnacles; there is no shade except under great toadstools of sandstone whose bases have been eaten to the shape of wine glasses by the wind. Everything is flaking, cracking, disintegrating, wearing away in the long, imperceptible weather of time. The ash of ancient volcanic outbursts still sterilizes its soil, and the colors in that waste are the colors that flame in the lonely sunsets on dead planets. Men come there but rarely, and for one purpose only, the collection of bones.

It was a late hour on a cold, wind-bitten autumn day when I climbed a great hill spined like a dinosaur's back and tried to take my bearings. The tumbled waste fell away in waves in all directions. Blue air was darkening into purple along the bases of the hills. I shifted my knapsack, heavy with the petrified bones of long-van-

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ished creatures, and studied my compass. I wanted to be out of there by nightfall, and already the sun was going sullenly down in the west.

It was then that I saw the flight coming on. It was moving like a little close-knit body of black specks that danced and darted and closed again. It was pouring from the north and heading toward me with the undeviating relentlessness of a compass needle. It streamed through the shadows rising out of monstrous gorges. It rushed over towering pinnacles in the red light of the sun, or momentarily sank from sight within their shade. Across that desert of eroding clay and wind-worn stone they came with a faint, wild twittering that filled all the air about me as those tiny, living bullets hurtled past into the night.

It may not strike you as a marvel. It would not, perhaps, unless you stood in the middle of a dead world at sunset, but that was where I stood. Fifty million years lay under my feet, fifty million years of bellowing monsters moving in a green world now gone so utterly that its very light was traveling on the farther edge of space. The chemicals of all that vanished age lay about me in the ground. Around me still lay the sheering molars of dead titanotheres, the delicate sabers of soft-stepping cats, the hollow sockets that had held the eyes of many a strange, outmoded beast. Those eyes had looked out upon a world as real as ours; dark, savage brains had roamed and roared their challenges into the steaming night.

Now they were still here or, put it as you will, the chemicals that made them were here about me in the ground. The carbon that had driven them ran blackly in the eroding stone. The stain of iron was in the clays. The iron did not remember the blood it had once moved within, the phosphorus had forgotten the savage brain. The little individual moment had ebbed from all those strange combinations of chemicals as it would ebb from our living bodies into the sinks and runnels of oncoming time.

I had lifted up a fistful of that ground. I held it while that wild flight of southbound warblers hurtled over me into the oncoming dark. There went phosphorus, there went iron, there went carbon, there beat the calcium in those hurrying wings. Alone on a dead

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planet, I watched that incredible miracle speeding past. It ran by some true compass over field and wasteland. It cried its individual ecstasies into the air until the gullies rang. It swerved like a single body; it knew itself and, lonely, it bunched close in the racing darkness, its individual entities feeling about them the rising night. And so, crying to each other their identity, they passed away out of my sight.

I dropped my fistful of earth. I heard it roll, inanimate, back into the gully at the base of the hill: iron, carbon, the chemicals of life. Like men from those wild tribes who had haunted these hills before me seeking visions, I made my sign to the great darkness. It was not a mocking sign, and I was not mocked. As I walked into my camp late that night, one man, rousing from his blankets beside the fire, asked sleepily, "What did you see?"

"I think, a miracle," I said softly, but I said it to myself. Behind me that vast waste began to glow under the rising moon.

I have said that I saw a judgment upon life, and that it was not passed by men. Those who stare at birds in cages or who test minds by their closeness to our own may not care for it. It comes from far away out of my past, in a place of pouring waters and green leaves. I shall never see an episode like it again if I live to be a hundred, nor do I think that one man in a million has ever seen it, because man is an intruder into such silences. The light must be right, and the observer must remain unseen. No man sets up such an experiment. What he sees, he sees by chance.

You may put it that I had come over a mountain, that I had slogged through fern and pine needles for half a long day, and that on the edge of a little glade with one long, crooked branch extending across it, I had sat down to rest with my back against a stump. Through accident I was concealed from the glade, although I could see into it perfectly.

The sun was warm there, and the unseen murmurs of forest life blurred softly away into my sleep. When I awoke, dimly aware of some commotion and outcry in the clearing, the light was slanting down through the pines in such a way that the glade was lit like

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some vast cathedral. I could see the dust motes of wood pollen in the long shaft of light, and there on the extended branch sat an enormous raven with a red and squirming nestling in his beak.

The sound that awoke me was the outraged cries of the nestling's parents, who flew helplessly in circles about the clearing. The sleek black monster was indifferent to them. He gulped, whetted his beak on the dead branch a moment, and sat still. Up to that point the little tragedy had followed the usual pattern. But suddenly, out of all that area of woodland, a soft sound of complaint began to rise. Into the glade fluttered small birds of half a dozen varieties, drawn by the anguished outcries of the tiny parents.

No one dared to attack the raven. But they cried there in some instinctive common misery, the bereaved and the unbereaved. The glade filled with their soft rustling and their cries. They fluttered as though to point their wings at the murderer. There was a dim, intangible ethic he had violated, that they knew. He was a bird of death.

And he, the murderer, the black bird at the heart of life, sat on there, glistening in the common light, formidable, unmoving, unperturbed, untouchable.

The sighing died. It was then I saw the judgment. It was the judgment of life against death. I will never see it again so forcefully presented. I will never hear it again in notes so tragically prolonged. For, in the midst of protest, they forgot the violence. There, in that clearing, the crystal note of a song sparrow lifted hesitantly in the hush. And finally, after painful fluttering, another took the song, and then another, the song passing from one bird to another, doubtfully at first as though some evil thing were being slowly forgotten. Till suddenly they took heart and sang from many throats joyously together as birds are known to sing. They sang because life is sweet and sunlight beautiful. They sang under the brooding shadow of the raven. In simple truth they had forgotten the raven, for they were the singers of life, and not of death.

I was not of that airy company. My limbs were the heavy limbs of an earthbound creature who could climb mountains, even the mountains of the mind, only by a great effort of will. I knew I had seen a marvel and observed a judgment, but the mind which was my

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human endowment was sure to question it and to be at me day by day with its heresies until I grew to doubt the meaning of what I had seen. Eventually darkness and subtleties would ring me round once more.

And so it proved until, on the top of a stepladder, I made one more observation upon life. It was cold that autumn evening and, standing under a suburban street light in a spate of leaves and beginning snow, I was suddenly conscious of some huge and hairy shadows dancing over the pavement. They seemed attached to an odd, globular shape that was magnified above me. There was no mistaking it. I was standing under the shadow of an orb-weaving spider. Gigantically projected against the street, she was about her spinning when everything was going underground. Even her cables were magnified upon the sidewalk and already I was half-entangled in their shadows.

"Good Lord," I thought, "she has found herself a kind of minor sun and is going to upset the course of nature."

I procured a ladder from my yard and climbed up to inspect the situation. There she was, the universe running down around her, warmly arranged among her guy ropes attached to the lamp supports—a great black and yellow embodiment of the life force, not giving up to either frost or stepladders. She ignored me and went on tightening and improving her web.

I stood over her on the ladder, a faint snow touching my cheeks, and surveyed her universe. There were a couple of iridescent green beetle cases turning slowly on a loose strand of web, a fragment of luminescent eye from a moth's wing and a large indeterminable object, perhaps a cicada, that had struggled and been wrapped in silk. There were also little bits and slivers, little red and blue flashes from the scales of anonymous wings that had crashed there.

Some days, I thought, they will be dull and gray and the shine will be out of them; then the dew will polish them again and drops will hang on the silk until everything is gleaming and turning in the light. It is like a mind, really, where everything changes but remains, and in the end you have these eaten-out bits of experience like beetle wings.

I stood over her a moment longer, comprehending somewhat re-

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luctantly that her adventure against the great blind forces of winter, her seizure of this warming globe of light, would come to nothing and was hopeless. Nevertheless, it brought the birds back into my mind and that faraway song which had traveled with growing strength around a forest clearing years before—a kind of heroism, a world where even a spider refuses to lie down and die if a rope can be spun on to a star. Maybe man himself will fight like this in the end, I thought, realizing that the web and its threatening yellow occupant had been added to some luminous store of experience, shining for a moment in the fogbound reaches of my brain.

The mind, it came to me as I slowly descended the ladder, is a very remarkable thing; it has gotten itself a kind of courage by looking at a spider in a street lamp. Here was something that ought to be passed on to those who would fight our final, freezing battle with the void. I thought of setting it down carefully as a message to the future: *In the days of the frost, seek a minor sun.*

But as I hesitated, it became plain that something was wrong. The marvel was escaping—a sense of bigness beyond man's power to grasp—the essence of life in its great dealings with the universe. It was better, I decided, for the emissaries returning from the wilderness, even if they were merely descending from a stepladder, to record their marvel, not to define its meaning. In that way it would go echoing on through the minds of men, each grasping at that beyond out of which the miracles emerge and which, once defined, ceases to satisfy the human need for symbols.

In the end I merely made a mental note: One specimen of Epeira observed building a web in a street light. Late autumn and cold for spiders. Cold for men, too.

I shivered and left the lamp glowing there in my mind. The last I saw of Epeira, she was hauling steadily on a cable. I stepped carefully over her shadow as I walked away.

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48 B.C.

L. F. GERLACH

Early in spring, against the seething hill,
The gray trees flowing upward through the light
Like river deltas bleeding into heaven . . .
Across the mouths of buds small birds in flight,
Crowding and crossing in the quiet air . . .
Along the dewy valley floor the lines
Of men uncoiling, westward now, toward Rome . . .
Caesar, I said, has need of such a day.
The earth lies shapeless even as before.

On the fourth of January we
Put out to the winter sea
Taking with us subordinates
Cneius Domitius Calvinus,
Publius Vatinius, Publius
Sulla—unfortunate consul—
And Lucius Cassius, and
Caius Calvisius Sabinus.
We calculated rightly all
That mortals might, and still,
Considering our wayward gods,
Were lucky, thus, victorious.
Arcana of dark village isles
To Roman eyes proved nothing then
But seasonal fortitude of those
Too certain of their native wiles,
Outlandish, not miraculous.

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Early in spring, against the cold blue hill,
The black trees twisting upward through the light
Like ancient deltas bleeding to the sea . . .
Across the mouths of branches birds in flight,
Calling and crowding in the watery air . . .
Along the island floor dark groups of men
Deploying slowly toward a distant sound,
Like those we slew, like those we lately slew . . .

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The Myth of Asia

JOHN M. STEADMAN

THE DICHOTOMY OF EAST AND WEST—of Europe and Asia—has long been a conventional frame of reference for the definition and discussion of problems involving these areas. Although its validity has not passed altogether unchallenged,[1] its currency is such that it is not untimely to examine what is commonly meant by these concepts and how far they are grounded in reality.

When we speak of Europe and the West in more than a geographical sense, we refer to a cultural community linked by similar religious ties, a common civilization, considerable racial homogeneity, and ultimately a common linguistic origin. The geographical limits of this community are today virtually irrelevant, for it includes countries as distant from the European continent and from one another as Australia and Canada, South Africa and Argentina, the United States and Chile. "Europe" and "the West" have become virtually synonymous terms, like "Asia" and "the East," and throughout this article I shall use them as such.

On the other hand, when we speak of Asia or the Orient, we are referring not to one major cultural community, but to at least three which profess three major religions, represent three major civilizations, embrace several different racial groups, and speak languages of diverse origin. There is, first of all, a Far Eastern community,[2] consisting chiefly of China, Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

[1] See W. Gordon East and O. H. K. Spate (eds.), "Epilogue: The Unity of Asia?" in *The Changing Map of Asia: A Political Geography*, London, 1950.

[2] For the nomenclature of these three societies I have followed Professor Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History*. In order to avoid unnecessarily complicating this discussion, I have, however, avoided introducing his subdivisions of these and other societies as well as the problem of their derivation from older civilizations. Similarly, I have omitted his dual classification of the successors of the Hellenic society as Eastern Orthodox society and Western Christendom.

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Its predominant religion is Mahayana Buddhism, with Confucian and Taoist elements, and its civilization derives largely from that of ancient China. Its people are of predominantly Mongolian stock, and most of its languages and alphabets are related.

Second, there is a Hindu community, centered largely in modern Hindustan. Hinduism, its major religion, and its civilization derive primarily from an older Indian society. Its languages and peoples are for the most part Aryan or Dravidian in origin. It exhibits, moreover, close cultural affinities with several of its neighbors in "Further India"—notably the Hinayana Buddhist countries[3] of Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Cambodia, whose religion and civilization are heavily indebted to those of ancient and medieval India. With the exception of Ceylon, whose languages and peoples most closely resemble those of Hindustan, the population of these countries is largely descended from Mongolian peoples who came from the river valleys of southern China.

Third, there is an Islamic community, extending eastward across Asia from Turkey and Jordan as far as Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, and westward across North Africa from Egypt to Morocco. In addition to sharing a common religion, it contains elements from the older cultures of Syria, Arabia and Iran.[4] It includes among its wide variety of peoples and languages many of Aryan, Semitic and Mongolian origin. Dominant in Africa, as well as in Asia, it can no longer be regarded as distinctively Asian.

These communities overlap, of course, particularly in areas where the cultural and religious values of Hindu society have encountered those of Islam or China.

As labels for analogous but antithetical communities, therefore, the terms "Asia" and "Europe" are patently inaccurate. On the one hand, Western society has outgrown its original association with the European continent, and the designation "European" has become increasingly anachronistic. On the other hand, the classification "Asian" does not sufficiently distinguish the major societies of that continent. Western society is, on the whole, intercontinental;

[3] Professor Toynbee classifies the Hinayana community among "fossil" relics of an older "Indic" civilization.

[4] Professor Toynbee subdivides Islamic society into an Arabic and an Iranic branch, both related to an older Syriac society.

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Eastern societies, with the partial exception of Islam, are for the most part subcontinental. For none of them is the continental designation appropriate.

The largest significant unit of Asian society is, then, not Pan-Asian but "sub-Asian." That is to say, the actual communities of the Orient cover only limited areas of the continent, and there is no single community even roughly co-extensive with Asia itself. Except in a strictly geographical sense, therefore, the concept of Asia is largely void of meaning, and thought which consciously or unconsciously embodies this concept is likely to be fundamentally unsound.

The fact that Asia has no real existence as a social unit necessarily has implications for the definition and discussion of Oriental affairs. On the continental level the problems which confront Eastern societies in their relations with one another and with the Occident cannot be satisfactorily defined. Only on more concrete planes —that of Asia's component civilizations and that of its component national states—can they be effectively diagnosed and solved. Asia, unlike Europe, designates no single society, and the term "Eastern," unlike "Western," cannot be employed, even loosely, to identify a single community. As the analogue and antithesis of Europe, the Eastern counterpart of Western society, the reality of Asia is largely verbal. It is, indeed, a myth.

I

Nevertheless, many Europeans and Asians believe that these concepts distinguish fundamental differences between the civilizations of the Orient and the Occident. East and West, they maintain, are not merely geographical terms; they are also modes of thinking and feeling—modes so different as to be virtually irreconcilable. Underlying the manifold and obvious diversity of the Orient, there is nevertheless an Eastern psyche distinct from that of the West, a mentality peculiarly and characteristically Asian. They argue that the genius of the East is static and introspective, while that of the West is dynamic and extroverted. The Orient, passive and contemplative, has displayed this genius in the cultivation of the spirit; the Occident, active and practical, in the amelioration of its en-

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vironment. The Eastern psyche, resigning itself to the external physical and social restrictions which oppress it, attempts not so much to master them as to escape them by self-mastery. The Western mind, confronted by similar obstacles, endeavors rather to harness them in the service of its own desires. The one seeks to transform itself; the other, the world about it. The one is an exponent of thought; the other, of action. Eastern man, in short, renounces the world to cultivate the resources of his own soul; Western man subordinates spiritual requirements to the satisfaction of material needs. The one looks for happiness in the microcosm; the other, in the macrocosm. The gulf between East and West is as profound as the difference between spiritual discipline and scientific technique, nirvana and utopia.

This arbitrary juxtaposition of the mystic and the enterpreneur as the representatives of Orient and Occident would be less unrealistic if it placed adequate stress on other aspects of Asia besides the contemplative. The antithesis of spiritual East and materialistic West eliminates all voices of Asia except those of the bonze and the Brahmin. While it is obviously more applicable to communities professing the Hindu or Buddhist religions than for other Oriental peoples, even within these societies it is largely relevant to the priestly or monastic classes. It neglects the political dynamism of Islam, the practical humanism of Confucianism, and the increasingly secular orientation of most Asian governments.

It has little relevance, moreover, to medieval Europe. Before the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution (movements significant for the progressively secular orientation and development of Western society) the European solution to the universal problem of reconciling spiritual and material requirements (the respective claims of the cloister and the bazaar) did not differ radically from the solutions evolved by the societies of the Orient. The asceticism of a Christian hermit was not essentially alien to that of the Hindu *sannyasi* or the Moslem *fakir*. A European monk or friar could have found in the Buddhist monasteries of East and Southeast Asia profounder resemblances to his own discipline than the tonsure, rosary, or begging bowl. The really marked divergences between the Eastern and Western solutions began to occur after the disintegration of the medieval solution in the West and the maturing

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of Western secular government and erudition away from religious ties. The current differences between Europe and Asia are to be measured less in terms of their traditional values than in terms of the changes which the West has experienced in the course of the last four hundred years—in what Europe has gained and lost since the Middle Ages.

As Asia itself has begun to undergo the same changes, these divergences are becoming less profound—indicative less of different orientations than of different stages of development toward similar norms.

The origin of this antithesis of impractical spirituality and efficient worldliness is to be found primarily in the nature of the European impact on Asia. The fact that this influence has been essentially economic, technical and political rather than spiritual, is due less to the psychological character of either region than to the nature of Europe's ends and Asia's needs. On the one hand, Oriental societies felt little need to look beyond their own religions and civilizations to seek spiritual or cultural tutelage from the Occident. In the area of material requirements, however, the case was otherwise, and Asia's heavy debt to European economic and political theory and techniques has been in large part an answer to needs its traditional institutions did not satisfy.

On the other hand, European objectives in Asia were, for the most part, material rather than spiritual, and the nature of these aims tended to influence the light in which East and West appeared to each other. Throughout, the initiative rested with the Occident; and by the very character of this relationship, in which Europe acted and Asia endured, the one necessarily assumed a dynamic part, the other a static role. As Western merchants sought and found trade and Western statesmen established dominion, they tended to re-create Orient and Occident alike in terms of their own functions and ends—into complementary images of governor and governed. To the West, Asia appeared as the wax into which Europe was to imprint its own ideas of civilization and order. To the East, Europe seemed a latter-day Procrustes, maiming the Asian societies in the very act of forcing upon them the rigid hospitality of its own convictions. Both views were biased.

The belief, sometimes expressed by Asians, in the antithesis of

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an inherently imperialistic Europe and a relatively nonaggressive Asia has also originated in the character and magnitude of the Western impact in recent years. It errs in at least three respects. It ignores the empires of ancient and medieval Asia. It overlooks the fact that ethical criticism of the imperial concept has been, on the whole, a comparatively recent development and originated largely within the framework of European liberalism rather than within that of Asian thought. Finally, it misrepresents the causes of Western dominance in the modern period. European empires in the Orient were acquired not by more aggressive intentions but by superior weapons and the ability to exploit existing frictions within Asian societies to their own advantage. Conversely, the relative quiescence of Asian states was due not to moral compunction against "imperialism," but to the fact that Western competition in the East had left little scope for indigenous Tamburlaines. The only Oriental power to make significant territorial gains during this period achieved them after radically modernizing its industry and armed forces. The real basis of this dichotomy is, then, not the contrasting motivation of East and West, but their different stages of technological development.

II

Although there is no objective basis for the dichotomy of East and West either as contrasting communities or as antithetical temperaments, the sense of European or Asian identity is nevertheless strong enough to make it convincing to many people on both continents. They continue to believe in the duality of Orient and Occident primarily because they have become accustomed to regarding themselves as Europeans or Asians. To explore the grounds of this belief, we must investigate the basis of Eastern and Western consciousness.

The geographical distinction between Europe and Asia is Western in origin,[5] as well as the factors primarily responsible for its extension to the cultural plane. The sense of European identity results not only from the tendency of most civilizations to regard their own values as absolute, but also from the character of the

[5] Professor Toynbee argues that this distinction was first made current by Aegean navigators.

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particular claims advanced by their predecessors. As the spiritual heir of two of the most self-conscious of cultures—the Hellenic and the Hebraic—Western civilization has, almost from the beginning, retained much of their inherent spiritual exclusiveness. The one thought in terms of the dichotomy of Hellene and barbarian, the other in terms of Jew and Gentile. The Greek city-states were acutely sensitive to the contrast between their own values and those of other societies. Alexander and his successors idealized their conquests on three continents by professing a mission to propagate Hellenic civilization. Rome claimed a similar right to extend the aegis of its law. Jerusalem believed itself to be the unique repository of the right doctrine and worship of the one true God.

Christian society, in turn, advanced a further claim. Inheriting the learning of Greece, the law of Rome, and the faith of Judea, it declared them all incomplete in the light of its own revelation. What was folly to the Greek and a stumbling block to the Jew became the foundation stone of a new community, exclusive in an entirely different sense from its forebears. Rejecting its predecessors, Christianity retained their claims to authority and utilized them to buttress its own. The wisdom of the Greeks was foolishness in the eyes of God, but it exalted Christian civilization over the barbarian. The law of Rome was secondary to the divine edicts revealed to Judea, but it gave the successors of the Roman Empire an established right to dominion. The religion of the Jews was superseded by a new dispensation, but its claim to peculiar election as the uniquely chosen vessel of the true faith was the basis of the spiritual authority of the Christian church. Christian society thus repudiated its temporal and spiritual forebears—the Academy, the Capitol, the synogogue—but it erected its own edifice on the foundations they had left.

The predecessors of the Christian community thus established the frame of reference in terms of which it was to regard the societies external to itself. Like Greece, Rome and Judea before it, European Christendom (both Greek and Latin) tended almost inevitably to look upon the peoples outside its own political and religious structure as barbarians and infidels. As the one veritable "City of God," before which all other temporal or spiritual dominions were doomed ultimately to fail, it regarded the alien groups

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on its frontiers as a triple danger—to classical civilization, to Roman law, and to true religion. Even the schism between Greek and Latin Christendom meant substantially that analogous claims to intellectual, political and spiritual dominion were advanced by two communities instead of one.

It was easy, therefore, for European Christendom to conceive its relationships with non-Christian societies to the east in terms of a "quarrel of continents,"[6] Its Near- or Middle-Eastern neighbors had been traditionally hostile not only to itself, but also to its Greek, Roman and Hebrew predecessors. The Far East was virtually unknown. It was from Asia that the Persians invaded Hellas. It was from Asia that Avars, Huns and Bulgars penetrated Europe. It was from Asia that the Turks harassed and eventually overran the Byzantine Empire and ultimately imperiled Vienna. For centuries Christian Europe regarded the regions to the east in terms of exotic fable or military threat.

Even before the time of Alexander, the Greeks had already begun to think of Asia as the antagonist of Europe. Aeschylus' drama *The Persians* emphasized the intercontinental aspect of the war between European and Asian societies, and the act of *hybris* whereby Xerxes invited nemesis was his bridging the Hellespont, thus daring to join together what the gods had put asunder. Similarly, Herodotus conceived the Trojan and Persian wars in terms of the larger pattern of a feud between Asia and Europe.

Although Alexander's conquests and the maritime trade of the Roman Empire opened the way for a limited knowledge of India to reach the West, Greek and Latin Christendom found the route to the Orient barred by Islam. China and India were too remote to be known except indirectly, and opinion concerning these countries remained largely myth. In medieval epic and romance they sometimes appeared as Islamic allies against Christendom. The Moslem states of the Near East, on the other hand, constituted a recurring menace to Christian Europe, and it was primarily in terms of this threat that the Western mind conceived Asia. As late as the sixteenth century, Tasso depicted the First Crusade not

[6] For a discussion of this "quarrel of continents" see Arnold J. Toynbee, Annex IX.C(i) "'Asia' and 'Europe'; Facts and Fantasies," *A Study of History*, Vol. VIII, Oxford University Press, 1954.

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merely as a Christian triumph over Islam, but also as a European victory over Asia and Africa. Turkish military pressure from the East tended to foster anew the belief in a quarrel of continents.

In this way the original geographical division between Europe and Asia also became the symbol of a cultural and political dichotomy. As Europe had become virtually synonymous with Christian society, Asia became identified with its major adversary. Even before the first Portuguese voyagers set foot on Indian soil, the categories in terms of which Europeans were to interpret the Orient had already been evolved.

III

The idea of Asia developed largely as the negative image of this relatively clear-cut conception of Europe. As the complement and opposite pole of the idea of the Christian West, it derived its significance for the Occidental primarily from its contrast with his own civilization. Its denotation varied with his own experience with the Orient and his own interests. Its meaning might be altogether nebulous, with no more definite content than "non-European" or "somewhere east of Suez." It might refer to the general characteristics of the Eastern country with which he was most familiar—Arabia, India, Japan—or the religion he knew best—Islam, Hinduism or Mahayana Buddhism. It might reflect the particular aspects which most attracted or dismayed him in Oriental society—porcelains or suttee, woodcuts or animal sacrifice. The concept of Asia might denote spiritual and aesthetic disciplines which seemed far superior to those of his own civilization or practices which he regarded as superstitious and barbarous.

The factors which originally fostered belief in the dichotomy of Orient and Occident have, however, largely disappeared in the West. The ideal of the unity of European civilization has progressively disintegrated since the Renaissance. The threat of Islamic invasion has long ceased to endanger Europe from the east. Direct contact with the Orient in recent years has given the West a sounder and more thorough knowledge of the East than ever before. In the Occident at least, the antithesis of Europe and Asia should eventually perish of inanition.

In the Orient, on the other hand, it is still a vital belief. Although

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a recent development in that region, it owes its currency primarily to the phenomenon of Asian consciousness.

The sense of Asian identity originated largely in reaction against the colonial system and in the common denominator of anti-Western sentiment which it fostered. A series of invasions, all within a period of four hundred years, by rival forces from Europe gave new life to the ancient concept of a war of the continents. Standing in analogous relationships to Western powers, Oriental nations experienced for the first time in history the bond of a common interest and a common intent. In this respect at least, Asian consciousness has been the creation and expression of submerged nationalism.

For Asian nationalities, the dichotomy of Orient and Occident served to crystallize resentment against Western domination and to confirm assurance in the survival of indigenous values. It became both a creed and a manifesto—a spiritual Declaration of Independence. By emphasizing the polarity of Europe and Asia, it suggested that they must be naturally independent of each other. East was East and could not become West, and vice versa. Oriental values should therefore survive the impact of Occidental values, and Oriental nations should outlast colonial rule. Because they violated the nature of things, Western policies in the East must ultimately come to naught. Regardless of whether colonialism per se was right or wrong, European colonialism in Asia must (it seemed) of necessity be *contra naturam*. The antithesis of East and West thus served as a rallying point for suppressed national feelings. At a time when Oriental civilizations seemed imperiled by that of the West, it affirmed their imperishability. At a period when many Oriental states were no longer free, it prophesied their eventual resurrection. Asian consciousness was simultaneously a protest against European colonialism and an affirmation of Asian independence.

Pan-Asian sentiment has not, however, been Pan-Asian in origin. Its genesis has been local rather than continental. It began not in an integrated Asian reaction against European supremacy, but in the separate reactions of the Orient's component tribes, nationalities and civilizations against the influence of particular Occidental powers. The East did not at first react as a unit against the West, but as several units. Only gradually did Eastern intellectuals begin to develop a sense of Asian identity and to conceive East-West re-

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lations in terms of a "quarrel of continents." Pan-Asian sentiment has been the result of anti-European sentiment—not its cause.

Western colonialism, moreover, is no longer a significant political reality in Asia. Although its memory may continue to evoke bitterness and distrust, this basis for the antithesis of Orient and Occident is obsolete.

The tendency to conceive the Western impact on the East almost entirely in terms of the colonial relationship has, furthermore, obscured the deeper grounds of Asian consciousness. Although the external relations between European and Asian societies during the modern period have to a considerable extent taken place within the framework of the colonial system, Western influence cannot be regarded simply as political or economic dominance. There is a danger of considering East-West relations purely on the national level and ignoring the more complex encounters between their civilizations.

These deeper roots of Asian consciousness are profounder than frustrated national ambitions or the humiliations of the colonial system, and they have not been eliminated by the termination of overseas government by foreign powers. They consist in the twofold crisis with which the invasion of Western civilization has presented the civilizations of the East. On the one hand, they face the common peril of disintegration through absorption of Western values and reorientation around Western norms. On the other hand, they recognize their relative underdevelopment in terms of Western economic and political standards. These factors are interrelated, and both have helped to foster the sense of Asian identity. The first, by confronting Oriental societies with virtually the entire value-system of the Occident, has contributed the common denominator of an awareness of their own non-European character and of their common danger. The second, by emphasizing the gulf between the political and economic development of the East and that of the West, has implanted in Asian communities both a common sense of material inferiority and a common desire to achieve material parity with the Occident.

Thus on the one hand, Eastern civilizations have experienced a common fear of spiritual and cultural "Westernization." On the other, they have felt a common need of emulating the material

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achievements of the West. The first crisis has been precipitated largely by Asian rejection of Western values; the second, by Asian acceptance of Western norms.

The dilemma confronting these societies consists, then, essentially in the fact that while remaining fairly indifferent to the religious and cultural values of the Occident, they have nevertheless adopted its economic and political concepts as the normal frame of reference for considering their own internal problems. They are faced, therefore, with the necessity of maintaining a selective compromise between those Western ideas which can strengthen their own values and those which may potentially undermine them. They must walk the razor's edge between an indiscriminate importation of Western values and a rigid conformity to indigenous norms. Thus, while reorganizing their own social and economic framework, they must nevertheless hold fast to their spiritual and cultural traditions. Conversely, they must transplant Occidental techniques in industry and government without also adopting its religion and civilization. This dilemma has been intensified by the comparatively recent emergence of many Asian states in contrast to the antiquity of Asian civilizations and by the modernity and foreign origin of these ideas.

The continuity of most Asian societies is to be found, on the whole, in their civilizations rather than in their national structures. Consequently, Oriental governments face the problem of altering deep-rooted traditions often far more ancient than themselves. Native sovereignty has not resolved the tensions created under colonial rule by the conflict of alien and indigenous values.

The methods by which Eastern governments are attacking the condition of economic and political underdevelopment are, moreover, relatively recent importations into the Orient. The independent nations of Asia were for centuries hostile to foreign ideas. Countries under colonial control, on the other hand, have regained sovereignty largely since the Second World War. Only recently, therefore, have Asian states been able to apply voluntarily the resources of modern scientific theory and techniques to the solution of problems which in some cases have existed for centuries.

The application of these alien concepts to situations in the Orient is, finally, artificial in many respects. In Europe they de-

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veloped within the process of social evolution and were in part molded and defined by it. In Asia, on the other hand, they have been imposed upon this process from without, as external norms for its development and control. In thus attempting to achieve virtually overnight those standards which Western societies evolved over a period of centuries, Eastern governments have to some extent intensified and prolonged the crises of Asian civilizations.

IV

There is, then, no objective basis for the dichotomy of Europe and Asia. Modern geographers reject the artificial division of what is, in fact, a single land-mass. The concept of a "quarrel of continents" was actually fostered by tensions between individual nations or civilizations—encounters between ancient Greece and Persia, between medieval Christendom and Islam, and between particular communities in modern Europe and Asia. The antithesis of East and West is, therefore, meaningless except as the sense of European or Asian identity has made it seem credible. The myth of Asia is really a projection of Asian consciousness; it is the opposite pole of a self-conscious Europe.

In recent years this belief has been molded largely by the character and extent of Western influence in the Orient. Symbolizing this influence on both the national and cultural planes, expressing both the relationship between European governments and Asian colonies and the impact of Western civilization on the civilizations of the East, it brought into focus the Orient's complex attitudes toward the Occident and crystallized the sense of Asian identity. With the decline of the colonial system, this cultural dilemma remains probably the most significant factor in perpetuating belief in this dichotomy.

Europe and Asia are divided chiefly by time. Between them lie barriers still more effective than oceans—the Industrial Revolution, the growth of modern science, and the evolution of modern parliamentary government. The antithesis of East and West refers ultimately to the consciousness of different stages of political and economic development; it distinguishes a world which has already experienced those metamorphoses from a world which, for the most part, has yet to undergo them.

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Lullaby to Myself

ERIKA RENON

Good night. Sleep well.
I wish you would not wake
from such sweet slumber,
as deeply colored as a stone of amber.
Good night. Sleep well.

The words I say, are not from me to you.
Good night. Sleep deep.
Don't listen to this song.

Sleep deep and well,
and never wake to see.
Since sleep you must, sleep with eternity.

✪ ERIKA RENON is the wife of the distinguished Hungarian author René Fueloep-Miller. An established German poet, she is now writing in English. This is the first of her poems to be published in the United States.

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Thoughts in a Small-Town Library

GRANVILLE HICKS

Because of an unprecedentedly large number of topical articles in the last few issues of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR—articles which seemed to us to require prompt publication unless they lost some of their effectiveness—we have postponed the publication of this essay by Mr. Hicks much longer than we intended. In fairness to the author, we feel that AMERICAN SCHOLAR readers should know that his piece was written in 1954 and originally planned for publication in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR not later than the Summer issue of 1955. For the reasons cited above and also because of special features in the Autumn number and the special Winter number, publication was delayed. Hence, it should be made clear that Mr. Hick's allusions to so many books in the forefront of public interest in 1954 were occasioned by his writing in that year. Except for illustrative matter, it is our conviction that what Mr. Hicks has to say is just as pertinent and interesting today as it was a year or two ago.
—EDITOR

FOR THE PAST NINE YEARS I have spent at least two hours a week at the desk of the Roxborough Free Library, waiting on the usually not very numerous customers and, in the intervals, busying myself with the accessioning of books or the filing of cards or perhaps with my own work. For most of the nine years the desk, the books and the other possessions of the library were located in half of a dingy private dwelling, but since last Independence Day, when the structure was dedicated, we have had our own library building, spacious, sunny and, if I do say so myself, as pleasant a place as anyone who cares for books could ask for.

I earned the right to be possessive about the library by nine years of money-raising and two years of manual labor. If the building of the library had depended on skills such as mine, it would never have been accomplished, but in this kind of enterprise everyone has to turn to, and even so clumsy a workman as I finds himself doing what he can with pick and shovel, hammer and saw, paint brush, tin snips, soldering iron. As I look about the library, I am reminded of what happened when we laid the floor, when we

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sheathed the walls, when we painted the ceiling. Although more than two hundred persons gave money and more than sixty contributed labor, there are a dozen of us who have special reason to feel that this is our library.

Again and again in the two years while the library was being built, I asked myself whether all the effort—the sometimes desperate struggle—was justified. Did Roxborough need a library as badly as all that? Could not our efforts have been directed to an end more beneficial to the community? These questions had not occurred to me in the summer of 1945, when some of us set up the library in the unoccupied part of the Methodist parsonage with five or six hundred books left by my father as the nucleus of our collection. And by the time the questions had raised themselves in my mind, it was too late to voice them, for money had been solicited and community pride had been enlisted. Some of the persons who worked hardest on the building have never taken a book from the library and never will; they worked as they did because, once the project was undertaken, the honor of Roxborough was at stake. As one of them said grimly, Monday night after Monday night, "This is one thing in this town that is going to be finished." And from the point of view of community morale, the finishing of the library was as gratifying an achievement as I have ever taken part in.

In 1945 it had not occurred to me to ask whether Roxborough needed a library because I had no doubt that every town needed one. We were a family that took libraries for granted. Before I was born, my parents had moved from Boston to a medium-sized town in New Hampshire, and the contrast between the Exeter library, which went out of its way to encourage borrowers, and the Boston library, which at that time guarded its books with the churlishness of a fussy old maid, was something I heard about all through my youth. Later we lived in a community that had no library, and this was not the least of our grounds for dissatisfaction with it. When, after three years in that desert, we moved again, we found ourselves within stone's throw of a branch library, and the main library could easily be reached by a boy on a bicycle. Since from my tenth year on I came close to averaging a book a day—as I can prove by lists that I sporadically kept—two libraries were none too many.

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By 1945 I had been living in Roxborough long enough to know that not everybody had our reading habits, but I assumed that most people would read books if books were available. I quickly discovered that most people wouldn't, although some would. In the first year we had 130 borrowers, with children slightly in the majority. During the following years the number of borrowers remained constant, and it was not until we opened the new building that the annual total passed the 150 mark. And the figures are more discouraging than at first glance they appeared to be, for at least a third of the borrowers are summer residents. This means that in a town of approximately a thousand people, more than half of whom are in easy driving distance of the library, fewer than one hundred are making use of it.

Working in the library once a week, and helping to keep its records, I know something about the habits of the borrowers. Of the fifty-odd children on our current registration list, the majority are under ten. Picture books and easy-reading books are the ones that circulate. It is true that the older children have access to school libraries, but I have talked enough with school librarians to know that most of our teen-agers read only under classroom compulsion. Those of them who really like to read—we have had a few—take books both from their school libraries and from our library.

As for the fifty-odd resident adults, there are eight or ten habitual borrowers, people who come to the library at least once a fortnight and who, whenever they return books, take others out. Of the twenty-five or thirty sporadic borrowers, a few are habitual readers but not habitual borrowers because they have other sources of supply, as, for instance, I and my family have. The majority, however, are people who read by fits and starts. Finally, there are ten or twelve persons who have used the library only once or twice in the past year. Some of them were looking for specific books or for books on specific subjects; the others, so far as I can see, just happened to drop in, and borrowed books because they thought it was the thing to do. (People who take out books in that fashion seldom return them without considerable nagging.)

If I have some idea why one hundred of my fellow-townsmen use the library, I am beginning to understand why nine hundred

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of them don't. To begin with, there are more people than I realized in the days of my innocence who refuse to read books. Some of them don't read anything, but the majority read newspapers and magazines and even, on rare occasions, paperback books—anything but books with hard covers. One such person, one who helped build the library, has said to me, "I haven't read a book since I left high school, and if I live right, I'll never read another." If my only contact with the community were through the library, I should find this phenomenon acutely depressing, but, fortunately, I see my neighbors in other and more reassuring contexts. At a meeting of the volunteer fire company, for instance, I am forced to realize that an antipathy to books is quite compatible with the existence of many admirable and useful qualities. The men I would count on if my house were on fire are not great readers. They might be better persons if they were, but they would not necessarily be better firemen.

In the second place, there are the people who enjoy reading but, as they are always telling me, don't find time. Ridiculous as their explanation sounds to me, I know they are sincere: there are just too many other interesting things for them to do. During the war, when gasoline rationing kept them home nights, such people bought books by the million, and in England, where the blackout placed a more drastic curb on other activities, the demand for books was even greater. Today it is customary to blame television for the decline in book sales and library circulation, and it is true that a few years ago I could trace the progress of television through town by the way families stopped using the library. On the whole, however, the families that had done any great amount of reading came back to the library once the novelty of TV had worn off, though perhaps they took fewer books than they had before. I suspect that of the thousands of hours that residents of Roxborough spend annually in watching television, no large proportion would otherwise have been spent reading books. The people who do not have time to read books because they are watching television would, in the pre-TV era, not have had time to read books because they were driving over to see Cousin Nellie or were going to the movies or

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were building a model railroad. Television, in other words, is only one of the many forms of entertainment with which reading has to compete.

Then there is the fact that people buy books, especially the paperbacks. When we opened the library, we had a steady demand for westerns and mysteries, but suddenly it fell away, and now we purchase only a few mysteries and no westerns. The explanation is, of course, that devotees of these genres are finding it more convenient to buy the books they want, at the negligible price of twenty-five cents each, and to throw them away when they are finished, than to bother to go to the library at specified hours on specified days.

In fact, the residents of Roxborough probably buy hundreds of books in the course of a year, though few of them ever step inside a bookstore. Many people in town belong to one or another of the book clubs, and the books they get, through choice or through negligence, are enough to occupy a moderate reader's time. Then, in the drugstores, there are the paperbacks, offering not only westerns and mysteries and a variety of light reading but also many of the novels—and much of the nonfiction, too—that a reasonably intelligent person has heard about and decided that he ought to read. I am not saying that anyone in Roxborough has done it, but one could, at little expense, put together a collection of better books than one will find, by and large, on the shelves of our library. And for the children there are the book racks in the supermarkets.

One more obstacle to the use of the library must be mentioned: inertia. The library is open two afternoons and two evenings a week, and to borrow books from it one must be on hand on one of those four occasions. What turns out to be more of a stumbling block is the fact that books borrowed must be returned during the same limited hours. For children who live within easy walking distance, this is no problem, and for habitual readers, who fall into a regular pattern of borrowing and returning, it is a problem readily solved; but people who feel the urge to read only occasionally are frustrated by the need for consulting the calendar and the clock, and if they do turn up at the right time to borrow books, they have trouble making connections on the other end. More than one per-

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son has stopped borrowing books—and some, heaven help us, have forbidden their children to take books—because nobody could remember the due date.

When we first began to talk about a library, various old-timers pointed out that Roxborough had got along without a library for a hundred years and more. We replied brightly that Roxborough had got along without a lot of things, such as electric lights, telephones, automobiles and radios, that had come to seem just as important to the old-timers as to us. There was, we insisted, such a thing as progress, and the time had come when Roxborough needed a library. Now I am not so sure. Perhaps the time had passed. A library might have meant more fifty or even twenty-five years ago, when there were fewer diversions and books were harder to come by, than it can mean today.

But here the library is, and it does function and function economically. On an annual budget of less than five hundred dollars we keep two or three hundred picture and easy-reading books moving through the hands—grubby and careless as they often are—of fifty or seventy-five children; provide both the habitual and the casual readers of the town, as well as the summer visitors, with practically all the novels that get on the best-seller lists; and add, by way both of gifts and of purchases, to a permanent collection that now and then proves useful to somebody or other.

When, however, on a gloomy winter afternoon, I begin to speculate on the value of the job we are doing, the old doubts recur. To begin with, fiction makes up 90 per cent of our adult circulation. Although we buy a variety of nonfiction books out of a sense of duty, only how-to-do-it books really move. Cookbooks, books on home decoration, and other books that the women of the community find useful in their daily lives circulate fairly well and go on circulating for a long time. (Comparable books for men—on hunting, home repairs, automobile mechanics—are much less in demand, presumably because the men who might find them useful never step inside the library.) Other types of nonfiction are, as a rule, simply ignored. Even the inspirational books that are so popular in the country at large have no appeal to the people of Roxborough. (This is not the kind of community that goes in for self-

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improvement and getting ahead.) Stories of personal adventure, such as Lindbergh's *The Spirit of St. Louis* and Herzog's *Annapurna,* and studies of current problems such as Elmer Davis' *But We Were Born Free,* are withdrawn two or three times and then stand untouched on the shelves. (One nonfiction book that has been borrowed again and again by the people of Roxborough is a book of mine entitled *Small Town,* and the reason became clear when the same people, for the most part, ignored *Where We Came Out,* another of my books: the latter is about me, but the former is about them.)

By comparison the circulation of fiction runs high, but only by comparison. When I checked on Rosemary Taylor's *Chicken Every Sunday,* which I remembered as being in greater demand than any other novel we have accessioned, I found that it had been withdrawn twenty-four times. Ben Ames Williams' *A House Divided* almost equaled it with a circulation of twenty-two, and *The Caine Mutiny, The Big Sky* and Elizabeth Goudge's *Pilgrim's Inn* came next with twenty-one each. (The figure for *Small Town,* which tops all other adult books, is forty-six.) *Not as a Stranger* seemed likely to be the most successful novel of 1954: it had been borrowed by eleven persons, four of whom had renewed it, and it had thus had a busy nine months. Harriette Arnow's *The Dollmaker* had been withdrawn eight times and renewed twice in six months. Neither Taylor Caldwell nor Frances Parkinson Keyes was doing as well as usual: *Never Victorious, Never Defeated* had been out eight times, and *The Royal Box* seven, and both were slowing down. Igor Gouzenko's *Fall of a Titan* had been borrowed just three times, but the novel that seemed least likely to succeed was William Faulkner's *A Fable*: after two persons had borrowed it, renewed it and given it up, it stood untouched.

As for the great novels of the past, they are never borrowed except, now and then, by unhappy high-school students. For that matter, the popular novels of last year and the year before, with rare exceptions, are neglected. One of my sadder duties is periodically to remove from the bookcase devoted to new fiction those novels that are no longer in demand. Since that is the only bookcase at which most borrowers bother to look, a book transferred to the

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permanent shelves is as good as dead. About half the novels we acquire, I am afraid, could be buried at the end of three months, but I usually let them linger on for twice that time. Six months is generous allowance for all but the very few.

Current fiction, then, is what the library chiefly deals in, and a good deal of what moves is mediocre, trivial or even trashy. It must be said, however, that some novels of substance do fairly well and even go on circulating beyond the customary six months. *The Big Sky* is a novel of considerable merit, and so, for all its weaknesses, is *The Caine Mutiny*, and both were popular. *The Naked and the Dead* almost continuously was in circulation for more than a year, and it seems likely that the same will prove true of *The Dollmaker*.

What gives a good novel its circulation? To begin with, some of the habitual borrowers will try almost anything, good or bad. (Three or four of these borrowers, so far as I can tell, are not really discriminating, but, being experimental, they read the good novels and often find they like them.) In the second place, we have people —especially among the summer residents—who want to read the books that are being talked about, and since good novels sometimes get on the best-seller lists, these persons read them. But the fashionable readers and the habitual readers together will not give a book a circulation of more than ten or twelve, and if a book goes above that figure, one can be sure that borrowers are recommending it to one another.

Personal recommendation works in curious ways. At a party last summer one of our few professional men, a young lawyer, got to talking about Peter DeVries' *Tunnel of Love*. He made it sound extremely amusing, as of course it is, and in consequence a book that was languishing on the shelves sprang into active circulation. The great success of *Chicken Every Sunday* resulted from the fact that the people who had read it got together and laughed over it and then other people wanted to read it too. When people borrowed *The Naked and the Dead,* we could read in their faces that they had been told it was a "dirty" book.

When people recommend a book, they don't, of course, say that it is a great novel or a great piece of literature. They say that it is funny or dirty or exciting or interesting. Books thought to be funny

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always do well—even when, like *The Egg and I*, they are to be found on the nonfiction shelf. Books thought to be dirty are not so sure of success, but every now and then one catches on, and usually I have no idea why it is this book rather than another. Next to saying a book is funny, the best recommendation is to say it's a wonderful story; it was in such terms that readers paid tribute to *The Caine Mutiny* as a compelling narrative, and thus gave it its vogue. Finally, to say a book is interesting usually means that it gives information on some subject that is significant to the reader—as *Not as a Stranger* gives an intimate account of the practice of medicine.

The worst thing a borrower can say about a novel is that he found it hard going. I am constantly being surprised at how little effort most of our readers are willing to make. I would not expect them to work as hard at Joyce's *Ulysses* or Faulkner's *A Fable* as one has to work to enjoy these novels, but they are discouraged by books that ask vastly less. If Wright Morris or Eudora Welty requires them to stretch their imaginations a little, they complain about obscurity and want to know why writers can't say what they mean. (I was told that Miss Welty's remarkably funny book, *The Ponder Heart*, was "queer.") If Saul Bellow or Ralph Ellison or Richard Wright compels them to use their minds, they feel put upon.

Roxborough is not in any strict sense a representative community; we are a small town, halfway between a state of disintegrating rural self-sufficiency and a state of prosperous suburbanism. But I console myself, on the darker Friday afternoons, with the knowledge that our problems of literary taste are not peculiar to us. As any publisher will tell you, with or without tears in his eyes, the audience for serious fiction is an infinitesimal part of the literate adult population and an almost negligible proportion of the book-buying public.

Moreover, as Frank Luther Mott's study of the best-seller in America, *Golden Multitudes*, shows, this has been true ever since the ability to read became general. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the names of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth, Mary Jane Holmes, E. P. Roe and Marie Corelli appear again and again on his list. Between 1900 and 1920 the conspicuous names are John

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Fox, Jr., Kate Douglas Wiggin, Gene Stratton Porter, Zane Grey, Elinor Glyn, Harold Bell Wright, Eleanor H. Porter and Edgar Rice Burroughs. And in her book about the popular story weeklies, *Villains Galore*, Mary Noel has given an even more gruesome account of public taste in the nineteenth century, an account that makes one feel less apologetic about Mickey Spillane, the busty pictures on the paperbacks, and even the comic books.

Dr. Mott's lists show, just as our circulation records do, that good novels can be popular, but one may suspect that the qualities that make them popular are not necessarily the qualities that make them good. Everything I have observed in our library bears out what critics have often said: that to be good and popular, a novel must make two kinds of appeal. To take a simple example, I liked *The Big Sky* because of the qualities that distinguish it from the conventional western adventure story, but most of our twenty-one borrowers were attracted by its resemblances to the work of Zane Grey. (That is not quite fair, for I remember talking with one reader who told me that he had got fed up with Grey because all his novels were just alike but Guthrie had something different. However, even this reader was attracted to the Guthrie novel in the first place because he could assimilate it to the Grey tradition.) When *Life* published Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, there was the usual talk about universal appeal, and of course the book does have the appeal of a good adventure story, but Hemingway had more than that in mind when he wrote it. The hundreds of thousands who have read certain of Faulkner's novels in paper covers have found that Faulkner has something for them; but that something is only a small part of Faulkner. Some years before *Moby Dick* was rediscovered, my father told me that it was a very good sea story if one knew what to skip.

If I were to discuss these problems with the patrons of the library—as I am not likely to do—I suspect that some of them, impressed by my academic background and my status as a writer of books, would admit that my judgment about books may be better than theirs, but I am sure that they would go on reading the kind of books they have always read. Others, more self-assured and perhaps more sophisticated, would argue that my taste, though differ-

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ent from theirs, is not necessarily better, and among these there might be some muttering about high-brow snobbishness. If the problems were being discussed theoretically, I would feel obliged to defend my own views, but in practice the customers are right. My primary job as a part-time librarian and a member of the board of trustees is to see that the patrons get what they want.

Yet I come back to the contradiction that is always confronting me: this library, to which I have devoted and am devoting no small amount of time, serves for the most part to circulate books that I think are not worth reading and is concerned only incidentally with books that I regard as important. Whether I like it or not, we are in the entertainment business.

The role of books in the entertainment business is a strange one. As the Industrial Revolution has provided people with more leisure and more money to spend, it has also developed new forms of entertainment—first the moving picture, then radio, then television. So well adapted are these media to the task of occupying billions of leisure hours that the survival of the habit of reading seems something of a miracle. But we have learned in this era of prosperity and approximate equality that there is less danger of standardization than the anti-equalitarian theorists have maintained. Given leisure, people do not all do the same things, and enough of them, it turns out, read books to make the publishing industry a small but important part of the business of providing mass entertainment.

A witty student of music, the late Donald Tovey, once called this "the Age of Inattention." The aversion to effort of which I have spoken is taken for granted by the creators of the mass media. The perfect form of entertainment for an Age of Inattention is the soap opera. Most daytime radio serials are so repetitious and slow-moving that a person might go crazy if he sat down and listened to them carefully. But, of course, they are not devised for careful listeners; they are deliberately written and produced in such a way that a housewife can follow them while she goes about her daily tasks.

Even a soap opera, however, cannot let the attention drift too far, and must be able to bring it back as well as to let it wander.

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The significant thing about the mass media is not that they require so little attention, but that they require no voluntary attention. The patrons of the mass media do not particularly want to be inattentive, at least not all the time. On the contrary, they know that what holds their attention is what best entertains them, and they will tell you happily of some TV program that they couldn't tear themselves away from. This, however, is something the program did for them; they did nothing for themselves. What really distinguishes the audience for mass culture from the audience of what is sometimes called "high" culture is the fact that the participation of the former is almost completely passive.

To a large extent, in all probability popular fiction has always been fiction that demanded no great activity on the part of the reader. When there were fewer competing forms of entertainment, people may have been willing to persist with books they found hard going, just as some of our habitual readers will do today, but Dr. Mott's lists show that effortless entertainment was what the majority wanted. And in our age, certainly, books must have some of the qualities that make the mass media so successful if they are to compete with them. Taking nothing for granted, they must reach out and seize the reader's attention. (The publishers of paperbacks have carried to its logical conclusion a principle always familiar to the designers of book jackets: the place to begin is not the first sentence but the cover of the book.) And thereafter popular novels must be careful not to ask of the reader more than, in his most relaxed moments, he is willing to give. He may be coaxed on occasion into using his mind, but if he knows that he is being made to work, the battle is lost.

If publishing were merely part of the mass entertainment industry, its prospects, however depressing, would at least be clear, but, of course, it is more than that. The mass media can be, and occasionally are, vehicles of high culture, but because of the costs involved, they must always cater primarily to the mass audience. Mass culture and high culture meet chiefly in the older forms of expression—music, the graphic arts and literature. And even in music and painting there is not a great deal of contact between the high-brow world and the low-brow world. Only in book publishing

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is it the general rule for the same firm to produce for both markets. Some publishers, it is true, specialize in mass culture, and a few, usually subsidized, limit themselves to books of a serious sort, but the average publisher makes the most that he can of both worlds.

Looking at this situation from the desk of the Roxborough Free Library, I find it easy to take an attitude of laissez faire, and fundamentally that is the only attitude I can take. Books which patrons of the library like to read get published, and books which I like to read get published. Sometimes they are the same books, but more often they are not. So long, however, as we all get what we want, nobody has a kick coming.

In my other capacity, however, as a person professionally concerned with literature, I cannot be so complacent. There is a matter of principle involved, and also a matter of personal interest. On principle, even though I believe that the reading of books is per se a good thing, I am interested in encouraging the reading of good books. Entertainment and literature, of course, are not mutually exclusive terms in my vocabulary: I never read a novel except in the hope of being entertained, unless I am being paid to read it, and even then I am quite likely to get entertainment as well as money. But the kind of entertainment furnished by trashy books seems to me no more meritorious than the kind provided by soap operas.

Furthermore, it is not quite true that we all get what we want. The average publisher publishes a certain number of books because he is convinced they will sell; he publishes others because he thinks they are both good and salable; he publishes still others because he believes they are good and hopes to God they will sell enough so that he will break even. Many serious novels, especially but not exclusively novels by new writers, fall into the third category. Most of our highly regarded novelists came up with a failure, or three or four failures, before their books began to sell.

And today the path of the philanthropic publisher is thorny. Before the war, when most novels were priced at $2.50, a publisher broke even if he sold from two to three thousand copies. Today, with novels costing from $3.50 to $5.00, the break-even point is five thousand copies or higher. The increase in price is a handicap,

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even though many other things cost twice as much as they did in the thirties; but the real problem is the fact that five thousand copies must be sold before expenses are covered. Apparently the audience for new, serious, untalked-about authors is just about the same size now as it was in 1939, and today that isn't big enough. I don't know of any first-rate novel, or even of any novel of marked promise, that has gone unpublished, but I do know of able and highly regarded novelists who have never made any money and who have drifted disconsolately from one chance-taking publisher to another. Authors are hard to discourage, but they are not immune to despair, and there have been several likely looking careers that ended with the second book or the third or fourth.

This means, I think, that those of us who like serious fiction are getting less of it than we are, so to speak, entitled to. That is bad for us and bad for American literature. Many of the earnest young novelists might not amount to much under the best of circumstances, but we are foolish to gamble on that. The literary life dries up if the young men and women with ambition and talent can't get into print.

A serious young writer cannot expect to reach a mass audience except by accident—the kind of accident that gave James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* a sale of hundreds of thousands in hard covers at $4.50 and a sale of millions in a $.75 paperback edition. But if the tiny audience that does exist for serious fiction were just a little less tiny, it would make a quite disproportionate difference to writers and publishers. Today a novel can have a substantial critical success—I can think of half a dozen examples—and still sell less than two thousand copies. If a few thousand persons changed their reading habits, it would revolutionize the publishing business, and it might do a great deal for American literature.

In spite of what I have said in disparagement of the tastes of our patrons, my experience in the library convinces me that such a change is possible. Most of our borrowers, I have no doubt, are fixed in their ways, and nobody and nothing will ever convince them that reading doesn't have to be effortless to be enjoyable, but we have a few who are more flexible. They have not read much serious fiction, presumably because they have seen no reason why they should, but

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they are capable of reading and enjoying novels of a fairly exacting sort. I suggested to two or three persons that they might try *The Adventures of Augie March,* and they liked it. The same people, on my recommendation, have been reading Wright Morris' *The Huge Season.* An engineer, who had read only the easier Faulkner, tackled, mastered and enjoyed *The Sound and the Fury.* So far he has balked at *A Fable,* but I am willing to bet that if he starts it—and I think that sooner or later he will—he will finish it and will know what it is all about.

The mild success of my missionary efforts hasn't much significance, but it does suggest to me that we have been unnecessarily passive about the tastes of the reading public. Who is making an effort on any considerable scale to interest people like my friends in what I call serious fiction? Now and then a book of some stature captures public attention by winning a National Book Award or being chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club or getting a prominent and enthusiastic review in the New York *Times* or the *Herald Tribune.* Every year, however, good novels are published that the kind of reader I have in mind never even hears of. Some are ignored in the big reviewing media, which this kind of reader probably sees, and some are reviewed badly, for several of our influential literary journalists have little patience with a novel that is not in a familiar pattern. There are people, I am convinced, who would take pleasure in these books, but they never get a chance to find out.

We have middle-brow reviewers who either have middle-brow tastes or can accurately guess what middle-brow readers will like, and we have high-brow critics who are so esoteric and so fastidious that they can talk only to a small circle of initiates. We have nobody —or almost nobody—who is writing for my friends and the thousands of people in the country who are like them. There is no one to explain to these people that the difficult writers are not being arbitrarily difficult, that they are merely trying to find a new way and a right way of saying what it is they see and feel. If the talented young novelists are experimenting with new methods, it is because they don't want to write the novels that have already been written: they want to write their own novels, and though many are bound to fail, some will succeed in making us see a new world through

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their eyes. There are readers who are capable of going along with such novelists if they are convinced that there is a good reason for doing so, and our job is to show them what they are missing. They are missing not only the joy, which comes rarely enough to anyone, of witnessing the emergence of a great new talent but also the excitement, which comes often, of watching a good try.

Although I still am not sure that what the library does justifies the effort it cost, I am glad we have it. A fairly large number of people read more books then they would read if it didn't exist, and a few read better books. As a part-time librarian and also as a person more or less dependent on the publishing industry, I am glad to have more books read—and no questions asked about quality. But as a literary critic, I am chiefly interested in the tiny margin of better reading. In the present situation we need allies, and I think we can have them if we are willing to work for them.

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Orwell: History as Nightmare

IRVING HOWE

ABOUT SOME BOOKS WE FEEL that our reluctance to return to them is the true measure of our admiration. It is hard to suppose that many people go back, from a spontaneous desire, to reread *1984*: there is neither reason nor need to; no one forgets it. The usual distinctions between forgotten details and a vivid general impression mean nothing here, for the book is written out of one passionate breath, each word is bent to a severe discipline of meaning, everything is stripped to the bareness of terror.

Kafka's *The Trial* is also a book of terror, but it is a paradigm and to some extent a puzzle; and it is possible to lose oneself in the rhythm of the paradigm and play with the parts of the puzzle. Kafka's novel persuades us that life is inescapably hazardous and problematic, but the very "universality" of this idea helps soften its impact: to apprehend the terrible on the plane of metaphysics is to lend it an almost soothing aura. And besides, *The Trial* absorbs one endlessly in its aspect of enigma.

Though not nearly so great a book, *1984* is in some ways more terrible. For it is not a paradigm and hardly a puzzle; whatever enigmas it raises concern not the imagination of the author but the life of our time. It does not take us away from, or beyond, our obsession with immediate social reality; and in reading the book we tend to say—the linguistic clumsiness conceals a deep truth—that the world of 1984 is "more real" than our own. The book appalls us because its terror, far from being inherent in the "human condition," is particular to our century; what haunts us is the sickening awareness that in *1984* Orwell has seized upon those elements of our public life that, given courage and intelligence, were avoidable.

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How remarkable a book *1984* really is can be discovered only after a second reading. It offers true testimony, it speaks for our time. And because it derives from a perception of how our time may end, it trembles with an eschatological fury that is certain to create among its readers, even those who sincerely believe they admire it, the most powerful kinds of resistance. It already has. Openly in England, more cautiously in America, there has arisen a desire among intellectuals to belittle Orwell's achievement, often in the guise of celebrating his humanity and his "goodness." They feel embarrassed before the apocalyptic desperation of the book, they begin to wonder whether it may not be just a little overdrawn and humorless, they even suspect it is tinged with the hysteria of the deathbed. Nor can it be denied that all of us would feel more comfortable if the book could be cast out. It is a remarkable book.

Whether it is a remarkable novel or a novel at all seems unimportant. It is not, I suppose, really a novel, or at least it does not satisfy those expectations we have come to have with regard to the novel—expectations that are mainly the heritage of nineteenth-century romanticism with its stress upon individual consciousness, psychological analysis and the study of intimate relations. One American critic, a serious critic, reviewed the book under the heading, "Truth Maybe, Not Fiction," as if thereby to demonstrate the strictness with which he held to distinctions of literary genre. Actually, he was demonstrating a certain narrowness of modern taste, for such a response to *1984* is possible only when discriminations are no longer made between fiction and the novel, which is but one kind of fiction, although the kind modern readers care for most.

A cultivated eighteenth-century reader would never have said of *1984* that it may be true but isn't fiction, for it was then understood that fiction, like poetry, can have many modes and be open to many mixtures; the novel had not yet established its popular tyranny. What is more, the style of *1984*, which many readers take to be drab or uninspired or "sweaty," would have been appreciated by someone like Defoe. He would have immediately understood how the pressures of Orwell's subject, like the pressures of his own, demand a gritty and hammering factuality. The style of *1984* is the style of a man whose commitment to a dreadful vision is at war with the

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nausea to which that vision reduces him. So acute is this conflict that delicacies of phrasing or displays of rhetoric come to seem frivolous—*he has no time, he must get it all down.* Those who fail to see this, I am convinced, have succumbed to the pleasant tyrannies of estheticism; they have allowed their fondness for a cultivated style to blind them to the urgencies of prophetic expression. The last thing Orwell cared about when he wrote *1984*, the last thing he should have cared about, was literature.

Another complaint one often hears is that there are no credible or "three-dimensional" characters in the book. Apart from its rather facile identification of credibility with a particular treatment of character, the complaint involves a failure to see that in some books an extended amount of psychological specification or even dramatic incident can be disastrous. In *1984* Orwell is trying to present the kind of world in which individuality has become obsolete and personality a crime. The whole idea of the self as something precious and inviolable is a *cultural* idea, a product of the liberal era; and Orwell has imagined a world in which the self, whatever subterranean existence it manages to eke out, is no longer a significant value, not even a value to be violated.

Winston Smith and Julia come through as rudimentary figures because they are slowly learning, at great peril to themselves, what it means to be human. Their experiment in the rediscovery of the human, which is primarily an experiment in the possibilities of solitude, leads them to cherish two things that are fundamentally hostile to the totalitarian outlook: a life of contemplativeness and the joy of "purposeless"—that is, free—sexual passion. But this experiment cannot go very far, as they themselves know; it is inevitable that they be caught and destroyed.

Partly, that is the meaning and the pathos of the book. Were it possible, in the world of 1984, to show human character in anything resembling genuine freedom, in its play of spontaneous desire and caprice—it would not be the world of 1984. So that in a slightly obtuse way the complaint that Orwell's characters seem thin testifies to the strength of the book, for it is a complaint directed not against his technique but against his primary assumptions. It can have meaning only if the world of Oceania is held to be not impossible,

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but inconceivable. And who in our time would be rash enough to say that?

The book cannot be understood or properly valued simply by resorting to the usual literary categories, for it posits a situation in which these categories are no longer significant. Everything has hardened into politics, the leviathan has swallowed man. About such a world it is, strictly speaking, impossible to write a novel, if only because the human relationships taken for granted in the novel are here suppressed.[1] The book must first be approached through politics, yet not as a political study or treatise. It is something else, at once a model and a vision—a model of the totalitarian state in its "pure" or "essential" form and a vision of what this state can do to human life. Yet the theme of the conflict between ideology and emotion, as well as their fusion and mutual reinforcement is still to be found in *1984* as a dim underground motif. Without this theme, there could be no dramatic conflict in a work of fiction dominated by politics. Winston Smith's effort to reconstruct the old tune about the bells of St. Clement is a token of his desire to regain the condition of humanness, which is here nothing more than a capacity for so "useless" a feeling as nostalgia. Between the tune and Oceania there can be no peace.

1984 projects a nightmare in which politics has displaced humanity and the state has stifled society. In a sense, it is a profoundly anti-political book, full of hatred for the kind of world in which public claims destroy the possibilities for private life; and this conservative side of Orwell's outlook is suggested, perhaps unconciously, through the first name of his hero. But if the image of Churchill is thus raised in order to celebrate, a little wryly, the memory of the bad (or as Winston Smith comes to feel, the good) old days, the opposing image of Trotsky is raised, a little skeptically, in order to discover the inner meanings of totalitarian society.

[1] Some people have suggested that *1984* is primarily a symptom of Orwell's psychological condition, the nightmare of a disturbed man who suffered from paranoid fantasies, who was greatly troubled by dirt and who feared that sexual contact would bring down punishment from those in authority. Apart from its intolerable glibness, such an "explanation" explains either too much or too little. Almost everyone has nightmares and a great many people have ambiguous feelings about sex, but few manage to write books with the power of *1984*. Nightmare the book may be, and no doubt it is grounded, as are all books, in the psychological troubles of its author. But it is also grounded in his psychological health; otherwise it could not penetrate so deeply the social reality of our time. The private nightmare, if it is there, is profoundly related to and helps us understand public events.

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When Winston Smith learns to think of Oceania as a *problem*—which is itself to commit a "crimethink"—he turns to the forbidden work of Emmanuel Goldstein, *The Theory and Practise of Oligarchical Collectivism*, clearly a replica of Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*. The power and intelligence of *1984* partly derive from a tension between these images; even as Orwell understood the need for politics in the modern world, he felt a profound distaste for the ways of political life, and he was honest enough not to try to suppress one or another side of this struggle within himself.

No other book has succeeded so completely in rendering the essential quality of totalitarianism. *1984* is limited in scope; it does not pretend to investigate the genesis of the totalitarian state, the laws of its economy, or the prospect for its survival; it simply evokes the "tone" of life in a totalitarian society. And since it is not a realistic novel, it can treat Oceania as an *extreme instance*, one that might never actually exist but which illuminates the nature of societies that do exist.[2]

Orwell's profoundest insight is that in a totalitarian world man's life is shorn of dynamic possibilities. The end of life is completely predictable in its beginning, the beginning merely a manipulated preparation for the end. There is no opening for surprise, for that spontaneous animation which is the token of and justification for freedom. Oceanic society may evolve through certain stages of economic development, but the life of its members is static, a given and measured quantity that can neither rise to tragedy nor tumble to comedy. Human personality, as we have come to grasp for it in a class society and hope for it in a classless society, is obliterated; man becomes a function of a process he is never allowed to understand or control. The fetishism of the state replaces the fetishism of commodities.

There have, of course, been unfree societies in the past, yet in most of them it was possible to find an oasis of freedom, if only because none had the resources to enforce total consent. But totali-

[2] "My novel *1984*," wrote Orwell shortly before his death, "is *not* intended as an attack on socialism, or on the British Labor Party, but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable. . . . I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive, but I believe . . . that something resembling it *could* arrive."

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tarianism, which represents a decisive break from the Western tradition, aims to permit no such luxuries; it offers a total "solution" to the problems of the twentieth century, that is, a total distortion of what might be a solution. To be sure, no totalitarian state has been able to reach this degree of "perfection," which Orwell, like a physicist who in his experiment assumes the absence of friction, has assumed for Oceania. But the knowledge that friction can never actually be absent does not make the experiment any less valuable.

To the degree that the totalitarian state approaches its "ideal" condition, it destroys the margin for unforeseen behavior; as a character in Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* remarks, "Only the necessary is necessary." Nor is there a social crevice in which the recalcitrant or independent mind can seek shelter. The totalitarian state assumes that—given modern technology, complete political control, the means of terror and a rationalized contempt for moral tradition—anything is possible. Anything can be done with men, anything with their minds, with history and with words. Reality is no longer something to be acknowledged or experienced or even transformed; it is fabricated according to the need and will of the state, sometimes in anticipation of the future, sometimes as a retrospective improvement upon the past.

But even as Orwell, overcoming the resistance of his own nausea, evoked the ethos of the totalitarian world, he used very little of what is ordinarily called "imagination" in order to show how this ethos stains every aspect of human life. Like most good writers, he understood that imagination is primarily the capacity for apprehending reality, for seeing more clearly and deeply whatever it is that exists. That is why his vision of social horror, if taken as a model rather than a portrait, strikes one as essentially credible, while the efforts of most writers to create utopias or anti-utopias founder precisely on their desire to be scientific or inventive. Orwell understood that social horror consists not in the prevalence of diabolical machines or in the invasion of Martian automatons flashing death rays from mechanical eyes, but in the persistence of inhuman relations among men.

And he understood, as well, the significance of what I can only call the psychology and politics of "one more step." From a bear-

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able neurosis to a crippling psychosis, from a decayed society in which survival is still possible to a totalitarian state in which it is hardly desirable, there may be only "one step." But it is decisive and, for all we know, irrevocable. To lay bare the logic of that social regression which leads to totalitarianism, Orwell had merely to allow his imagination to take . . . one step.

Consider such typical aspects of Oceanic society as telescreens and the use of children as informers against their parents. There are no telescreens in Russia, but there could well be: nothing in Stalinist society contradicts the "principle" of telescreens. Informing against parents who are political heretics is not a common practice in the United States, but some people have been deprived of their jobs on the charge of having maintained "prolonged associations" with their parents. To capture the totalitarian spirit Orwell had merely to allow certain tendencies in modern society to spin forward without the brake of sentiment or humaneness. He could thus make clear the relationship between his model of totalitarianism and the societies we know in our experience, and he could do this without resorting to the clap-trap of science fiction or the crude assumption that we already live in 1984. In imagining the world of 1984 he took only one step, and because he knew how long and terrible a step it was, he had no need to take another.

Through a struggle of the mind and an effort of the will that clearly left him exhausted, Orwell came to see—which is far more than simply to understand—what the inner spirit or ethos of totalitarianism is. But it was characteristic of Orwell as a writer that he felt uneasy with a general idea or a total vision; things took on reality for him only as they were particular and concrete. The world of 1984 seems to have had for him the hallucinatory immediacy that Yoknapatawpha County has for Faulkner or London had for Dickens, and even as he ruthlessly subordinated his descriptions to the dominating theme of the book, Orwell succeeded in noting the details of Oceanic society with a painstaking and sometimes uncanny accuracy.

There are first the incidental accuracies of mimicry. Take, as an example, Orwell's grasp of the role played by the scapegoat-enemy

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of the totalitarian world, the rituals of hate for which he is indispensible, and more appalling, the uncertainty as to whether he even exists or is a useful fabrication of the state. Among the best passages in the book are those in which Orwell imitates Trotsky's style in *The Theory and Practise of Oligarchical Collectivism.* Orwell caught the rhetorical sweep and grandeur of Trotsky's writing, particularly his fondness for using scientific references in nonscientific contexts: "Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or another." And in another sentence Orwell beautifully captured Trotsky's way of using a compressed paradox to sum up the absurdity of a whole society: "The fields are cultivated with horse plows while books are written by machinery."

Equally skillful was Orwell's evocation of the physical atmosphere of Oceania, the overwhelmingly gloomy shabbiness of its streets and houses, the tasteless sameness of the clothes its people wear, the unappetizing gray-pink stew they eat, that eternal bureaucratic stew which seems to go with all modern oppressive institutions. Orwell had not been taken in by the legend that totalitarianism is at least efficient; instead of the usual chromium-and-skyscraper vision of the future, he painted London in 1984 as a composite of the city in its dismal grayness during the last (Second) world war and of the modern Russian cities with their Victorian ostentation and rotting slums. In all of his books Orwell had shown himself only mildly gifted at visual description but remarkably keen at detecting loathsome and sickening odors. He had the best nose of his generation—his mind sometimes betrayed him, his nose never—and he judged societies by their smell, literally and metaphorically. In the world of 1984, he seems to be suggesting that all of the rubbish of the past, together with some that no one had quite been able to foresee, had been brought together.

The rubbish survived, but what of the past itself, the past in which men had managed to live and sometimes with a little pleasure? One of the most poignant scenes in the book is that in which Winston Smith, trying to discover what life was like before the reign of Big Brother, talks to an old prole in a pub. The exchange

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is unsatisfactory to Smith, since the worker can remember only fragments of disconnected fact and is quite unable to generalize from his memories; but the scene itself is a fine bit of symbolic action, indicating that not only does totalitarian society destroy the past through the obliteration of objective records but that it destroys the memory of the past through a disintegration of individual consciousness. The worker with whom Smith talks remembers that the beer was better before Big Brother (a very important fact), but he cannot really understand Smith's question: "Do you feel that you have more freedom now than you had in those days?" To pose, let alone understand, such a question requires a degree of social continuity, as well as a set of complex assumptions, which Oceania is gradually destroying.

The destruction of social memory becomes a major industry in Oceania, and here of course Orwell was borrowing directly from Stalinism which, as the most "advanced" form of totalitarianism, is infinitely more adept at this job than was fascism. (Hitler burned books, Stalin had them rewritten.) In Oceania the embarrassing piece of paper slides down memory hole—and that is all.

Orwell is similarly acute in noticing the relationship between the totalitarian state and what passes for culture. Novels are produced by machine; the state anticipates all wants, from "cleansed" versions of Byron to pornographic magazines; that vast modern industry which we call "popular culture" has become an important state function. Meanwhile, the language is stripped of words that suggest refinements of attitude or graduations of sensibility.

And it is the same with feeling as with language. Oceania seeks to blot out spontaneous affection because it assumes, with good reason, that whatever is uncalculated is subversive. Smith thinks to himself:

> It would not have occurred to [his mother] that an action which is ineffectual thereby becomes meaningless. If you loved someone, you loved him, and when you had nothing else to give, you still gave him love. When the last of the chocolate was gone, his mother had clasped the children in her arms. It was no use, it changed nothing, it did not produce more chocolate, it did not avert the child's death or her own; but it seemed natural for her to do it.

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At only a few points can one question Orwell's vision of totalitarianism, and even these involve highly problematic matters. If they are errors at all, it is only to the extent that they drive valid observations too hard: Orwell's totalitarian society is at times more *total* than we can presently imagine.

One such problem has to do with the relation between the state and "human nature." Granted that human nature is itself a cultural concept with a history of change behind it, granted that the pressures of fear and force can produce extreme variations in human conduct, there yet remains the question: To what extent can a terrorist regime suppress or radically alter the fundamental impulses of man? Is there a constant in human nature which no amount of terror or propaganda can destroy?

In Oceania the sexual impulse, while not destroyed, has been remarkably weakened among the members of the Outer Party. For the faithful, sexual energy is transformed into political hysteria. There is a harrowing passage in which Smith remembers his sexual relations with his former wife, a loyal Party member who would submit herself once a week, as if for an ordeal and resisting even while insisting, in order to procreate for the Party. The only thing she did not feel was pleasure. Orwell puts the matter with some care:

> The aim of the Party was not merely to prevent men and women from forming loyalties which it might not be able to control. Its real, undeclared purpose was to remove all pleasure from the sexual act. Not love so much as eroticism was the enemy, inside marriage as well as outside it. . . . The only recognized purpose of marriage was to beget children for the service of the Party. Sexual intercourse was to be looked on as a slightly disgusting minor operation, like having an enema. . . . The Party was trying to kill the sex instinct, or, if it could not be killed, then to distort it and dirty it. . . . And so far as the women were concerned, the Party's efforts were largely successful.

That Orwell has here come upon an important tendency in modern life, that the totalitarian state is inherently an enemy of erotic freedom, seems to me indisputable. And we know from the past that the sexual impulse can be heavily suppressed. In Puritan communities, for example, sex was regarded with great suspicion,

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and it is not hard to imagine that even in marriage the act of love might bring the Puritans very little pleasure. But it should be remembered that in Puritan communities hostility toward sex was interwoven with a powerful faith: men mortified themselves in behalf of God. By contrast, Oceania looks upon faith not merely as suspect but downright dangerous, for its rulers prefer mechanical assent to intellectual fervor or zealous belief. (They have probably read enough history to know that in the Protestant era enthusiasm had a way of turning into individualism.)

Given these circumstances, is it plausible that the Outer Party members would be able to discard erotic pleasure so completely? Is this not cutting too close to the bone of indestructible human needs? I should think that in a society so pervaded by boredom and grayness as Oceania is, there would be a pressing hunger for erotic adventure, to say nothing of experiments in perversion.

A totalitarian society can force people to do many things that violate their social and physical desires; it may even teach them to receive pain with quiet resignation; but I doubt that it can break down the fundamental, if sometimes ambiguous, distinction between pleasure and pain. Man's biological make-up requires him to obtain food, and, with less regularity or insistence, sex; and while society can do a great deal—it has—to dim the pleasures of sex and reduce the desire for food, it seems reasonable to assume that even when consciousness has been blitzed, the "animal drives" of man cannot be violated so thoroughly as Orwell suggests. In the long run, these drives may prove to be one of the most enduring forces of resistance to the totalitarian state.

Does not Orwell imply something of the sort when he shows Winston Smith turning to individual reflection and Julia to private pleasure? What is the source of their rebellion if not the "innate" resistance of their minds and bodies to the destructive pressures of Oceania? It is clear that they are no more intelligent or sensitive—certainly no more heroic—than most Outer Party members. And if their needs as human beings force these two quite ordinary people to rebellion, may not the same thing happen to others?

A related problem concerns Orwell's treatment of the workers

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in Oceania. The proles, just because they are at the bottom of the heap and perform routine tasks of work, get off rather better than members of the Outer Party: they are granted more privacy, the telescreen does not bawl instructions at them nor watch their every motion, and the secret police seldom trouble them, except to wipe out a talented or independent worker. Presumably Orwell would justify this by saying that the state need no longer fear the workers, so demoralized have they become as individuals and so powerless as a class. That such a situation might arise in the future it would be foolhardy to deny, and in any case Orwell is deliberately pushing things to a dramatic extreme. But we should also notice that nothing of the kind has yet happened, neither the Nazis nor the Stalinists having ever relaxed their control or surveillance of the workers to any significant extent. Orwell has here made the mistake of taking more than "one step," thereby breaking the tie between the world we know and the world he has imagined.

But his treatment of the proles can be questioned on more fundamental grounds. The totalitarian state can afford no luxury, allow no exception; it cannot tolerate the existence of any group beyond the perimeter of its control; it can never become so secure as to lapse into indifference. Scouring every corner of society for rebels it knows do not exist, the totalitarian state cannot come to rest for any prolonged period of time. To do so would be to risk disintegration. It must always tend toward a condition of self-agitation, shaking and reshaking its members, testing and retesting them in order to insure its power. And since, as Winston Smith concludes, the proles remain one of the few possible sources of revolt, it can hardly seem plausible that Oceania would permit them even the relative freedom Orwell describes.

Finally, there is Orwell's extremely interesting though questionable view of the dynamics of power in a totalitarian state. As he portrays the party oligarchy in Oceania, it is the first ruling class of modern times to dispense with ideology. It makes no claim to be ruling in behalf of humanity, the workers, the nation or anyone but itself; it rejects as naïve the rationale of the Grand Inquisitor that he oppresses the ignorant to accomplish their salvation. O'Brien,

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the representative of the Inner Party, says: "The Party seeks power entirely for its own sake. We are not interested in the good of the others; we are interested solely in power." The Stalinists and Nazis, he adds, had approached this view of power, but only in Oceania has all pretense to serving humanity—that is, all ideology—been discarded.

Social classes have at least one thing in common: an appetite for power. The bourgeoisie sought power, not primarily as an end in itself (whatever that vague phrase might mean), but in order to be free to expand its economic and social activity. The ruling class of the new totalitarian society, especially in Russia, is different, however, from previous ruling classes of our time: it does not think of political power as a means toward a nonpolitical end, as the bourgeoisie did to some extent; it looks upon political power as its essential end. For in a society where there is no private property the distinction between economic and political power becomes invisible.

So far this would seem to bear out Orwell's view. But if the ruling class of the totalitarian state does not conceive of political power as primarily a channel to tangible economic privileges, what *does* political power mean to it?

At least in the West, no modern ruling class has yet been able to dispense with ideology. All have felt an overwhelming need to rationalize their power, to proclaim some admirable objective as a justification for detestable acts. Nor is this mere slyness or hypocrisy; the rulers of a modern society can hardly survive without a certain degree of sincere belief in their own claims. They cling to ideology not merely to win and hold followers, but to give themselves psychological and moral assurance.

Can one imagine a twentieth-century ruling class capable of discarding these supports and acknowledging to itself the true nature of its motives? I doubt it. Many Russian bureaucrats, in the relaxation of private cynicism, may look upon their Marxist vocabulary as a useful sham; but they must still cling to some vague assumption that somehow their political conduct rests upon ultimate sanctions. Were this not so, the totalitarian ruling class would find it increas-

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ingly difficult, perhaps impossible, to sustain its morale. It would go soft, it would become corrupted in the obvious ways, it would lose the fanaticism that is essential to its survival.

But ideology aside, there remains the enigma of totalitarian power. And it *is* an enigma. Many writers have probed the origins of totalitarianism, the dynamics of its growth, the psychological basis of its appeal, the economic policies it employs when in power. But none of the theorists who study totalitarianism can tell us very much about the "ultimate purpose" of the Nazis or the Stalinists; in the end they come up against the same difficulties as does Winston Smith in *1984* when he says, "I understand HOW: I do not understand WHY."

Toward what end do the rulers of Oceania strive? They want power; they want to enjoy the sense of exercising their power, which means to test their ability to cause those below them to suffer. Yet the question remains: Why do they kill millions of people and find pleasure in torturing and humiliating people they know to be innocent? For that matter, why did the Nazis and Stalinists? What is the image of the world they desire, the vision by which they live?

I doubt that such questions can presently be answered, and it may be that they are not even genuine problems. A movement in which terror and irrationality play so great a role may finally have no goal beyond terror and irrationality; to search for an ultimate end that can be significantly related to its immediate activity may itself be a rationalist fallacy.

Even while noting these possible objections to Orwell's book, I have been uneasily aware that they might well be irrelevant—as irrelevant, say, as the objection that no one can be so small as Swift's Lilliputians. What is more, it is extremely important to note that the world of 1984 is *not* totalitarianism as we know it, but totalitarianism after its world triumph. Strictly speaking, the society of Oceania might be called post-totalitarian. But I have let my objections stand simply because it may help the reader see Orwell's book somewhat more clearly if he considers their possible value and decides whether to accept or reject them.

1984 brings us to the end of the line. Beyond this—one feels or

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hopes—it is impossible to go. In Orwell's book all political themes reach their final and terrible flowering, not perhaps in the way that writers like Dostoevsky or Conrad expected, but in ways that establish a continuity of vision and value between the nineteenth- and twentieth-century political novelists.

There are some writers who live most significantly for their own age; they are writers who help redeem their time by forcing it to accept the truth about itself and thereby saving it, perhaps, from the truth about itself. Such writers, it is possible, will not survive their time, for what makes them so valuable and so endearing to their contemporaries—that mixture of desperate topicality and desperate tenderness—is not likely to be a quality conducive to the greatest art. But it should not matter to us, this possibility that in the future Silone or Orwell will not seem as important as they do today. We know what they do for us, and we know that no other writers, including far greater ones, can do it.

In later generations *1984* may have little more than "historic interest." If the world of 1984 does come to pass, no one will read it except perhaps the rulers who will reflect upon its extraordinary prescience. If the world of 1984 does not come to pass, people may well feel that this book was merely a symptom of private disturbance, a nightmare. But we know better: we know that the nightmare is ours.

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So.....

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

I have never read any of the books by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, but I have read a good deal about them. This neatly parallels the habit of the lower middle-brows who commonly do no more than read about the books I (sometimes) actually read. We share also the reprehensible habit of having strong opinions about what we know only at secondhand, and we express them vigorously when we get a chance. So here goes. What strikes me most is neither the good which thousands think Dr. Peale has done them, nor the evil a few critics accuse him of fostering, but the general get-up-and-go of the man who turns up as frequently as a movie-night-club-television star riding the crest of his wave. Once it was only businessmen who were expected to be hustlers. Nowadays even ministers of the gospel know how to get a hump on.

Some months ago a popular magazine gave us eager readers-about-Peale a jolt when it spread across its cover the legend, "Dr. Peale's Daughter Speaks Up." This certainly seemed calculated to suggest that there was a viper in the bosom of the doctor's family. We got a considerable letdown when we found inside the tent only the less sensational title, "Life With Daddy"; but the article which followed is of prime importance in documenting the impression that Dr. Peale is a whiz at breezing through work. This is how it begins: "One morning not long ago my father was just getting ready to go on one of his numerous speaking engagements. He had just finished reading the galley proofs of a new book that he had written, making notes for his weekly television show and his daily and weekly radio programs, dictating replies to some of the 1,000 or more letters he gets every day, and talking over a problem with one of his parishioners at the Marble Collegiate Church in New York City." It is certainly a strong proof of the efficiency of his system that he is, presumably, not enjoying the prestige of one of those gastric ulcers of which the usually busy American is as proud as the saint used to be of the stigmata, and for the same reason—namely that either stigmata or ulcers are proof that virtue has exceeded what mere human flesh can bear.

Nevertheless, I can't recall anything in the Gospels which suggests that even Jesus ever kept up an endless round of comparable activities. He is said to have wept, and it has often been pointed out that if He ever smiled the event went unrecorded. But is it not equally important that He never, so far as we know, hurried? With all mankind to save he took forty days off for contemplation—an activity for which Dr. Peale's schedule seems to leave little time.

Thoreau once said that he wanted to live "deliberately." How long has it been since even a college professor admitted publicly that either he or anyone else had a right to so much as an unfulfilled longing for anything of the sort?

As a matter of fact, the college professor seems to have less and less time for either contemplation or research. His classes get larger; his obligations to advise, counsel or generally comfort individuals and to sponsor student activities become more and more burdensome. He is also more and more likely to have to teach summer school if ends are going to meet. No matter how much leisure the machine may have created, he, at least, doesn't seem to get any of it.

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And if it weren't for the foundations which enable him to snatch a year now and then, he would have precious little chance of demonstrating that "productivity" which his institution demands but certainly doesn't provide time for.

Everybody knows that his real wages have fallen while more and more of his time is devoted to strictly professional duties. Everybody also knows that for most "workers" the reverse is true. And we are told, on what seems good authority, that these same workers are going to work still less and get still more as time goes on—not so much because they will demand it or because society will want to favor them, but simply because when productivity rises the average individual has to consume more and produce for fewer hours a day to prevent abundance from creating unemployment and then depression.

I used to think there was probably a catch in this somewhere, but if you see it in the SCHOLAR, it must be true; and I have seen it there—notably, for instance, in the article on "Uncle Sam and the Farmer," where I read that "the old proverb—'You can't eat your cake and have it'—was useful when applied to the winter's food supply on the self-sufficing farm of one hundred years ago. In the commercial economy of today, the farmer *must* eat his cake to have it." This puts very neatly not only the situation of the farmer, but the whole paradox of the economy of abundance. It's no longer "Let 'em eat cake" but "Make 'em eat cake." In fact, it is "Make 'em eat more and more of it—indigestion or not."

The only difference of opinion in informed quarters seems to be over the question of the relative stress which ought to be put upon consuming more and on producing less. Up to a point, the more you produce the higher is the standard of living for the worker. But when the standard can't get any higher—i.e., when there are two or three cars in every garage and a television set in every room—then you better not make any more cars or TV sets. In concrete terms, the question then becomes, "What is the next step in, for instance, the auto industry?" Another hike in wages or another reduction in the work week? One or the other is inevitable or prosperity is going to come apart at the seams. Unfortunately, it is not equally evident—in fact, it is extremely unlikely—that the college professor will either teach fewer hours or get substantially higher wages. He, at least, is no threat to prosperity, no matter how hard he works or how little he consumes. Let him eat bread—if anything.

No doubt his peculiar position as an exception to the general rule is due in part to the simple fact that there are too few of him either to exert political pressure or to attract the attention of disinterested planners who think only in large numbers. Neither his influence at the polls nor his involuntary effect upon the general economic situation is sufficient to make anyone care whether or not he gets "a fair share of the national income." Unlike the farmer, he is not required to eat cake for the public good.

So far as "leisure" rather than "standard of living" is concerned, there is another stubborn fact which tends to prevent a fair share of leisure from going to anyone whose work depends upon any skill, knowledge or capacity not so clearly definable and so readily available that he may quit when the whistle blows and turn his job over to someone else who can take it up just where he left off.

Neither the mass production of goods nor the invention of laborsaving devices has made the job of being President of the United States any more leisurely. In industry itself, the big executive is not enjoying a shorter work week. The usual week of the statesman, the executive and the research scientist cannot be shortened by dividing it into three shifts.

If by leisure you mean what Thoreau called "a margin around my life"; if you mean, that is to say, waking hours which can be devoted to pursuits not connected with the making of a living, then it is obvious that already, even when, as many think, the era of high wages and short hours has just opened, the industrial worker in

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one of the large industries has more leisure than either his boss or most of those engaged in those occupations where the individuality of the worker has an important bearing on his job. Business executives, successful doctors and successful lawyers—unlike research scientists and professors—make more money than factory workers. But they have less leisure.

Briefly and very early in his career, Thoreau was half-convinced by a crank named Etzler, who was one of the early proponents of the theory that the result of improved technology should—and ultimately would—be not an increase in material goods, but an increase in the leisure which, of course, the average man was going to use in the pursuit of Wisdom and Beauty. Bernard Shaw was one of the moderns who followed this same line and professed to see just ahead the time when two or three hours of "robot labor" a day spent in some such "brainless occupations as machine tending" would support a population of artists and philosophers. But the catch seems to be that in even the most thoroughly mechanized society, there will still be a lot of brain work to be done, and that those who have the brains to do it will be the very ones who can't knock off after two or three hours.

Even today the intellectual worker is likely to be the one who has no time to himself. No doubt his job is more interesting and it is sometimes argued that for that reason he neither needs nor even wants any leisure. But he does need wide interests, and without leisure he cannot have them. It used to be said that a pure specialist was a pure idiot, and it may very well be that the specialist will have to specialize more and more, presumably becoming in the process more and more of an idiot.

A Bourbon friend with whom I sometimes discuss things snorted (Bourbons always snort) when I suggested this possibility. "Typical," he said, "of the processes of democracy. You take leisure away from those who could use it and give it to those for whom entertainment has to be provided. Your intelligent and educated man has less and less time to read books, think thoughts or enjoy the arts. Your manual laborer has more and more time that has to be got rid of somehow and he is becoming less and less capable of disposing of it unless stultified by one or another of the so-called 'mass entertainments.' And that, of course, is fine from the economist's standpoint. What you would call 'cultural activities' are useless under an economy of abundance because they don't use up anything. High-brows spend too much time reading the same old books, looking at the same old pictures, or even, God save the mark, in 'contemplation.' But the mass-man's diversion always involves expenditures. The more leisure he has, the more TV sets are worn out, the more crooners employed, and the more workers given jobs."

Not being able to go all the way with my Bourbon friend, I took the problem to an optimistic left-winger who, for the sake of my own security, I had better call merely "an acquaintance" with whom I do not "associate intimately." My premise, he said, was sound, but I just hadn't carried my thinking far enough. Of course the worker is inheriting the earth, as Marx knew he would. When the process is complete, then, for the first time in history, most men, rather than merely a few, will enjoy leisure and the culture which goes with it. If there is a minority whose special tasks keep them busy all their waking hours, that was, after all, formerly the fate of all *except* a minority. And minorities may well be sacrificed to the greatest good of the greatest number.

I had to admit that I probably hadn't thought the thing through, but I have been trying ever since to find my way around in this future. Now I am able, for instance, to imagine two factory workers discussing the cultural limitations of either their boss or the chief engineer of the research department. "After all it's not his fault. He has had to work hard all his life and he hasn't enjoyed our advantages. I doubt if he reads one book a year outside his specialty. But do you think you would if you came home tired after a twelve-hour day? Under those

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circumstances you and I also would go to sleep in front of a TV set."

Most of my difficulty has come merely in getting accustomed to the transvaluated term. In the future, naturally, only a member of the working class will be expected to have any leisure, and those who used to be called the "underprivileged" will enjoy all the privileges. When we do take all this for granted then, I suppose, the revolution will be complete. The workers will be not only the bosses but also the cultural elite, while bureaucrats, managers and politicians will be, in fact, what they have often somewhat hypocritically called themselves, namely, "servants of the people."

Many a college professor, without half meaning it, has advised his son to take up some manual trade at which he could make a decent living. In all seriousness, he may someday be giving the same advice for a different reason: "I don't want you to miss the finer things of life."

Since the "Paradox of Leisure" seems to be our general subject this quarter, I might as well add an anthropological footnote. The 1917 edition of Cecil Sharp's *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians* includes 274 songs and 968 tunes, together with an introduction by the editor in which he expresses the opinion that the mountain people had acquired "so many of the essentials of culture" partly at least because of "the large amount of leisure they enjoy." Thirty-six years later, when his collaborator, Maud Karpeles, revisited the area, she reported it "completely revolutionized" and found that the old songs were fading from the memory of a generation which no longer had time for them: "The people are now so busy making money to improve the general standard of life that they no longer have the leisure they once possessed."

Thoreau may have been exaggerating a bit when he said that the quickest way to get from one place to another was to walk, because this took less time than it would to earn the money for a railroad ticket. But it does look as though Miss Karpeles' mountaineers were busier trying to pay for laborsaving gadgets than they were doing the labor. Probably it really is *easier work,* and that suggests an important distinction: Laborsaving isn't necessarily the same thing as timesaving.

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The Enigmatic Corsican

THE MIND OF NAPOLEON: A Selection from His Written and Spoken Words. Edited and translated by J. Christopher Herold. *New York: Columbia University Press. 320 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by GEOFFREY BRUUN

"My great and most distinctive talent," Napoleon declared three years before his death, "is to see everything in a clear light; even my eloquence is of the kind which sees the core of each question from all facets at once—like the perpendicular which is shorter than the diagonals."

Few critics of his own time or since have denied that Napoleon possessed an intellect of remarkable power and lucidity. "What centuries have dimly meditated / His mind surveys in brightest clarity," Goethe wrote; and a hundred years later, H. A. L. Fisher summed up the prime characteristic of his thinking as "a savage and intolerant relevance." Yet, among the multitude of writers who have assayed Bonaparte's character and career, it is surprising how few have made a comprehensive and systematic attempt to take the measure of a mind which Goethe considered unique.

Mr. Herold's volume is the most intelligent and systematic approach to this problem available in English. It invites comparison with R. M. Johnston's *The Corsican: A Diary of Napoleon in His Own Words*, with *The Opinions and Reflections of Napoleon* edited by L. C. Breed, and with J. M. Thompson's recent one-volume selection from Napoleon's letters prepared for Everyman's Library. It is closest in concept and plan to Breed's compilation, but it allows Napoleon to explain and reveal himself more impressively.

The excerpts Herold has assembled (all identified in an appendix) are skillfully selected and admirably translated. The editing is scrupulous and the occasional cross references are illuminating. For an introduction, Mr. Herold has composed a twenty-five page essay on Napoleon's mentality, a commentary difficult to match in its compression, clarity and insight.

"Some sort of corrective is needed," this introduction explains, "to direct the reader's attenton to the essential coherence of Napoleon's thought, a coherence which is present despite all the contradictions, despite the lack of system, despite the intellectual opportunism." To appreciate this coherence one must recall the extent to which Napoleon's mind became a sort of high-tension cable through which the forces of the eighteenth century discharged themselves into the nineteenth. When he boasted that he had "swallowed all the formulas," that he was "the executor of the Revolution," and that it was his function to link the old Europe with the new, he did not greatly exaggerate the historical significance of his own career.

That a man whose life, until the last six years, was a drama of demonic activity should have developed the habit and found the leisure for intense meditation is in itself remarkable. Yet no one who ponders these pages can dismiss the insights they record as shallow sophistry. There is much *ex parte* reasoning, it is true; there are impromptu verdicts forged to close a discussion. But there are many profound and objective judgments and predictions that reveal deep and original thought.

For a century after Napoleon's overthrow, liberal historians were disposed to regard

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✪ GEOFFREY BRUNN is the author of *Saint Just: Apostle of the Terror, Europe and the French Imperium* and *Clemenceau.* He has taught at Cornell University and Columbia University.

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his career as an anomaly. His plebiscitary despotism was a perversion of political progress. His contempt for human life, his conviction that most men wanted to be governed rather than to govern themselves and preferred equality to liberty, seemed the heresies of a Corsican liberticide. His pretense that he alone had fully grasped the forces implicit in European society appeared demonstrably false because he rode them to a catastrophic fall.

Today it is less easy to dismiss his views on politics and men as wholly anachronistic. His gaudy imperium, which once seemed a pastiche of historical plagiarisms, has turned out to be a prefigurement of twentieth-century dictatorships. His belief that he was an historical imperative, a herald from the future, and his wish that he could have been his own grandson have acquired a new and wry significance.

The most arresting passages in Mr. Herold's collection are those that illustrate Napoleon's prescience. He predicted great progress in the natural sciences as contrasted with the arts because science is "cumulative" whereas "the professor of literature . . . does not expound a single new principle." He declared that the investigation of electricity would prove "the road to the great discoveries." He anticipated the risks of overspecialization—"The famous division of labor," he warned, "which . . . has brought mechanical pursuits to perfection, is absolutely fatal to the perfection of intellectual production."

In the political sphere, he forecast the unification of Italy and concluded that "the French are most likely to prolong their mutations." He thought that the United States might someday outmatch Britain on the seas. He was confident that the Latin Americans would assert their independence and that it would be the beginning of a new era —"It will bring about the independence of all colonies." And he declared that "Russia will become the ruler of the world."

Seven years ago, in *The Swiss Without Halos*, Mr. Herold helped to correct some popular misconceptions about Switzerland. He has now done the same for the enigmatic Corsican, amending the estimate of him that has become a textbook stereotype. "Do you know what I most admire about this world?" Napoleon asked at the height of his power. "It is the total inability of force to organize anything."

Under Whatever Sky

THE USES OF PHILOSOPHY: An Irwin Edman Reader. Edited, with an introduction, by Charles Frankel. *New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc. 211 pp. $3.50.*

Reviewed by SAXE COMMINS

The commemorative volume of Irwin Edman's representative writings does honor to a gracious and gentle man who was a roaming philosopher. It also reflects a very considerable credit upon the editor who compiled it. Professor Charles Frankel, first a student and then in a very real sense a follower of his mentor at Columbia University, has arranged this garland of prose and verse. It is a tribute to a teacher and a thinker to whom clarity and sensibility were primary and the rearing of a systematic structure of thought was always secondary.

Professor Frankel has the perception to recognize not only that Irwin Edman was a disciplined scholar and a man of learning, but that these attributes were merely "graceful obbligatos of his thinking, not its be-all and end-all." His life, far from being devoted to the exposition of a set of philosophical theses, was indeed an adventure in enjoyment, and in his teaching he was an enthusiastic guide during a more than thirty-year holiday of the spirit under whatever skies.

The selections in *The Uses of Philosophy*, made with a judicious if somewhat economical eye, derive from many of Irwin Edman's books and are so arranged as to capture the quality of a mind, unquestionably amateur

✪ An alumnus of the old publishing school of Boni and Liveright, SAXE COMMINS has been, since 1933, a senior editor for Random House and the Modern Library.

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in standing, dedicated to wisdom but never neglectful of wit. The culling is, for the most part, from such disparate works as *Four Ways of Philosophy, Candle in the Dark, Philosopher's Holiday, Adam, the Baby, and the Man from Mars,* and his distinguished column in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR.

Yet out of this multiplicity of choices and variety of interests, Professor Frankel has wrought an anthology that reflects the unity of a mind as at home with ideas, people and places as it was alien to all solemnity, vanity and pretense. His introduction is a felicitous and discerning essay which appraises a man, a teacher and a writer who, however he scorned a message, never could forego an illuminating comment.

And it is commentary, lucid, gay and civilized, whether in casual light verse, in his delight in Plato or his misgivings about Schopenhauer. When he tells of the provincial French doctor who came to treat a case of ptomaine poisoning and stayed to discuss the possibilities of organizing a Society of Itinerant Humanists, he is serenely at ease in the comradeship of the intellect. If his fancy turns to music or poetry, superstition or belief, to facts or miracles, to psychoanalysis or the upper reaches of consciousness, there is always an alertly inquiring mind at play.

In examining foreign views of American life, most of which are out of all proportion because of their own—and our own—exaggerations and the distorted myths created by them, he is able to see in the long view the good uses to which our growing power and goalless speed can be directed. In us there is a residual sense of humor, of balance and even of reasonableness that will ultimately emerge, in spite of many signs to the contrary.

To Irwin Edman the arts are more than excitements and pleasures; they also fulfill the functions of intensification, clarification and interpretation. He makes art a synonym of intelligence.

It is this emphasis on intelligence that determines Irwin Edman's philosophical status. If it is possible to assign a position to so restless and versatile a mind, it must be as a naturalist-humanist. The philosophical synods may object to a merger of these two schools of philosophy, but in the face of such a possible proscription, Irwin Edman avows that if man attains his natural place in the natural world, he can gain spiritual insight and a new moral stature. His declaration of a naturalistic faith is simply that "nature perennially reasserts vitality and creation" and therefore is the origin and stimulus of such glimpses we may have of knowledge and being. His defense of naturalism relies mainly on intellectual modesty and moral candor.

As a humanist, Irwin Edman did not formulate rigid patterns of dominant values of life, but sought as many as he could find in the infinite diversity of human experience. He never felt the need to escape into supernaturalism or to hide behind an abstraction. He did not count on the promise of another world to make tolerable the one in which he had so active an interest. To him the good and its old companion, the beautiful, were to be discovered in what was human and natural.

The Uses of Philosophy is a richly suggestive portrait that conveys the many-sidedness of a man as avid for experience as he was to communicate it. Those who came under his direct influence and others who knew him more remotely through his writings would gain an even clearer picture of the man if the scant but revealingly autobiographical portions of "Coteries of the Mind" and "Philosophers Without Portfolio" had not been abridged for the sake of economy. The entire texts of these essays on nonprofessional philosophers and the societies of the mind, as well as the charming colloquy with M. Platon, as they appeared originally in *Philosopher's Holiday,* are far more rewarding than these truncated versions.

With or without compression, the essays in *The Uses of Philosophy* bring into vivid focus a nimble and civilized mind. They evoke the presence and the spirit of a companionable interpreter who was always natural and always humane.

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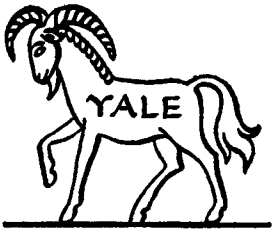

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Verbal Chess Game

EROS AND CIVILIZATION: A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud. By Herbert Marcuse. *Boston: Beacon Press. 300 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by ABRAM KARDINER, M. D.

Since Nietzsche few philosophers have had much to say concerning the crisis in Western culture of the past 150 years. The main streams of Western philosophy and also the Enlightenment seem to have run their course with Hegel. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were prophets of a style of philosophical thinking concerned with the problems of life as defined by the new social order of the productive liberal society. This is probably why "will" and "action" became the problems of philosophy just as "metaphysics" had been in the century preceding. The end of the nineteenth century brought new implements of self-critique, among them psychology.

It was Freud who created new implements for the evaluation of culture. Dr. Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* draws his inspiration from the tools invented by Freud. In this book he believes that he has found a place for the philosophical method operating with the tools of Freud's later instinct theory and his metapsychology. Notwithstanding the fact that these concepts were invented by Freud for the purpose of solving purely clinical problems, Dr. Marcuse proclaims his right to use them according to rules of his own making and affirms his immunity from responsibility to fact or to clinical usefulness. That is to say, he uses these concepts for their literary value and in accordance with the tradition of metaphysics. Marcuse shows a predilection for those concepts of Freud that even his closest followers have found tautological and incapable of yielding any new information. Marcuse likes them because he thinks they lend themselves to the construction of a closed system in which anything can be proved to be true if only you grant a few assumptions. What if some or all of these concepts do not stand for any real and identifiable phenomena? Then you merely engage in a verbal chess game and the solutions arrived at cannot be translated into any form of action. It is just for fun.

One of the assumptions that Marcuse wants us to grant at the outset is that psychological categories have become political categories. This is so because "formerly autonomous and identifiable psychological processes are being absorbed by the individual in the state—by his public existence. Private disorder reflects the disorder of the whole, and the cure of the personal disorder depends more directly on the cure of the general disorder. One can no longer do a psychological analysis of social and political events; one can only develop the sociological substance of the psychological notions."

Does Marcuse mean that life has become more standardized because the means of communication have become all pervading and inescapable? If so, man can still be evaluated as an organism in a more complex environment. Or are we to have a revival of the notion that society is an organism, and adaptation is conceived of as an unfolding of an entelechy in which instinct is identified as the prime mover, instinct being both organic memory and the specific memory of particular events of man's remote history? It is the latter.

This style of thinking was in vogue when the evolutionary anthropologists were occupied with the problems of social origins. Freud added a new twist to their method by taking his cues from the constellations found in the individual today and regarding them as survivals of events that took place in prehistory. This assumption did away with the necessity of studying social evolution and with the necessity of including external reality as a factor in human adaptation. Freud solved problems in social

✪ DR. ABRAM KARDINER is clinical professor of psychiatry at Columbia University and director of the Columbia University Psychoanalytic Clinic for Training and Research. He is the author of *The Individual and His Society, The Psychological Frontiers of Society, Sex and Morality* and other works.

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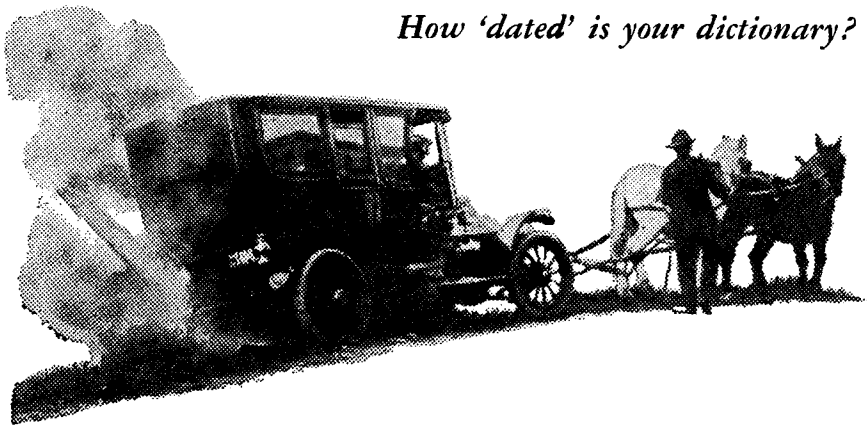

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evolution by assuming that ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis. Marcuse adopts all these methods of Freud and then adds some of his own. In his system, history and adaptation are conceived as the outcome of an inner drama in which the actors are abstract forces which interact with and upon each other: ego against id, ego against superego, death instincts against life instincts, et cetera. An inherited sense of guilt capriciously makes itself felt from time to time with momentous social consequences. The upshot of the whole argument seems to be, how do we get the life instincts to maintain their dominance over the death instincts?

There is, however, one limitation in Freud that Marcuse will not accept. Having committed himself to the acceptance of Freud's idea that culture is the consequence of instinct repression, he can use no other yardstick. Therefore he wants a culture that will gradually diminish the restraints on the individual.

The essence of Marcuse's argument is the following: Society has reached a level of productivity in which the social demands upon instinctual energy to be spent in alienated labor could be reduced. Hence the repressive organization of the instincts is necessitated less by the struggle for existence than by the interest in domination. He believes that we can have a nonrepressive culture if we eliminate the necessity for "surplus repression," that is to say, domination. He believes that this could have been accomplished at the beginning of history as a "non-repressive distribution of scarcity (as may have existed in matriarchal phases of ancient society): the other a rational organization of fully developed industrial society after the conquest of scarcity." This can be done if basic human needs, sexual and social, are satisfied without toil. The alienation of labor can be accomplished by automation, reduction of labor time, and exchangeability of function. Leisure is the solution. This solution cannot take place

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by elevating the standard of living because the latter justifies surplus repression. He wants the criteria to be universal gratification of human needs and freedom from guilt. With painless gratification of needs, the need for painful effort in labor would be so small that "a large area of repressive constraint no longer sustained by external forces would collapse." This is what would release the life instincts in which he has great confidence.

In an epilogue, Marcuse savagely attacks all the neo-Freudian revisionists—at least those he happens to know about. He completely ignores those who have tried to establish the relationship of man to society on an empirical and experimental basis.

The reviewer is among those who cannot afford the luxury of the kind of word game pursued in this book. He is among those who cannot abandon testable propositions and move with such recklessness beyond the confines of tangible evidence. He is among those who believe that reflections like those in which Dr. Marcuse indulges himself do not make a contribution to our knowledge. More than that, they do damage. It is difficult to share his belief in the magic of words; nor is it safe to trust any of the conclusions drawn with the aid of the numerous semantic atrocities that abound throughout the book. The effect of his thesis to to encourage irresponsibility and hopelessness, for the simple reason that he places the control of society in forces over which man cannot hope to exert any influence. Our choice is to go along with thinkers like Marcuse who believe they can arrive at truth by sheer logic, without empirical basis, or to choose the more arduous task of patient investigation of human relations in a continually changing society with the hope that we can learn to direct ourselves. There are skeptics who believe that studies such as the latter can teach us only how to get along in societies that no longer exist. Perhaps so! But to trust thinkers like Marcuse is surely to fiddle while Rome burns.

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Reviewed by HAZARD ADAMS

Volume II of Scribner's series, devoted to the work of less-known young poets, includes three books of poems, *The Hatch* by Norma Farber, *The Irony of Joy* by Robert Pack, and *Good News of Death and Other Poems* by Louis Simpson. With the exception of Mr. Simpson, none has previously published a book. All have appeared in the major literary quarterlies.

First of all, one must say that the whole series is an excellent venture. There are a good many fine young poets in this country who, if they wish to be heard, can publish only in the literary quarterlies without much hope of reaching a wide audience. Most readers of the quarterlies tend, I suspect, to skim the poems and read the short stories and critical essays about established contemporaries. If a poet wishes to publish a book, he may have to resort to the vanity presses (if his own vanity will allow it). If he does find a reputable publisher, the chances are that he will have to put up enough cash to offset the anticipated loss. For obvious reasons, most poets cannot do this, so they must be content to publish here and there in the quarterlies, where they can be read by other poets or skimmed by readers on the way to the latest criticism of criticism.

The second thing one must say is that the present volume contains some very good poetry. The third thing is that the poetry is readable poetry. It is not "difficult" modern; at the same time, it is not simple at the expense of depth. Mr. Simpson, whose work strikes me as the best of the three, is, for example, capable of evoking an imme-

HAZARD ADAMS, assistant professor of English at Cornell University and an editor of *Epoch*, is author of the recent book, *Blake and Yeats: The Contrary Vision.*

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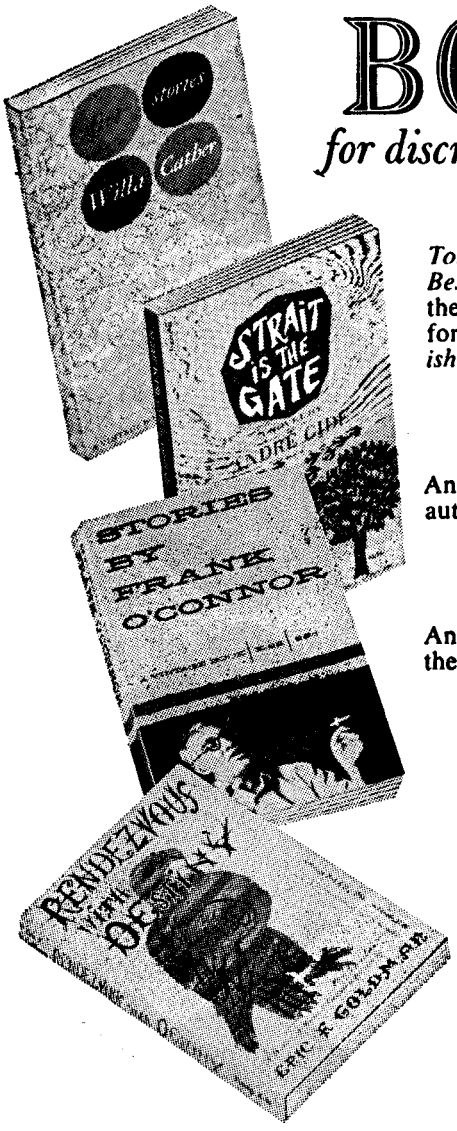

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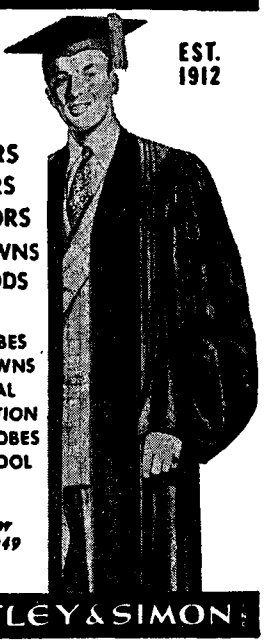

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diate response in a variety of forms and with a variety of subjects. One has merely to open his book to the first poem, "The True Weather for Women," to discover that he is such a master of his craft that his technique actually talks. That is, the wit of the poem (Mr. Simpson can be a very witty poet) is created by a sure control of rhyme and meter. One must go to some of Ransom's best lyrics in order to make a proper comparison. The same complete control is evident in "The Man Who Married Magdalene," "John the Baptist," and several shorter pieces. Mr. Simpson is a poet of variety. There are love poems, some very good war poems, and the title piece, a mock-pastoral verse drama. Wit is not his only forte. Many of the poems are informed by a

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And yellow the quilt of repose,
But brown of the dust and grey wind blowing
Are the colors that my eyes chose.

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The superficial analogy here is Hopkins; the deeper one is Kathleen Raine. Mrs. Farber's poetry is clearly feminine. Her ef-

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fects are really her own. In spite of her sheer virtuosity with words in the first section of the book, the more restrained sonnets of the second section show Mrs. Farber at her best, infusing the form with life and working in a deeper vein. One suspects that these poems show the direction that her art will finally take: a strongly imagistic, personal, feminine poetry—the emotion held in and formed rather than bursting out and rushing. But this is not to deny the power of the whole body of the work. Mrs. Farber's poetry is intense and eminently readable, even if the technique occasionally calls attention to itself.

Farber, Pack and Simpson present the reader with excellent contrast and variety. Scribner's could not have done better on this score had it tried. The volume is a kind of microcosm of contemporary poetry. Readers who think of modern poetry as esoteric and difficult, lacking in the singing voice and the passion for life are in for a surprise if they open their minds to these poets. Apparently Scribner's thinks that a little prying may be necessary; the volume has an introductory essay by John Hall Wheelock, discussing the work of the three poets.

Brief Comments

THE POLITICS OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY, 1640-1945. By Gordon A. Craig. *Oxford. $11.50.*

It has long been accepted that in the history of Prussia-Germany the army has been a state within a state. This volume is a scholarly and well-documented account of the role that the army, through its general staff, has played in determining German national policy while outwardly holding itself aloof from policies.

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GUY STANTON FORD

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET THOUGHT. Edited, with an introduction, by Ernest J. Simmons. *Harvard.* $7.50.

There have been extensive debates as to how much of present Soviet thought was derived from the traditional Russian and how much of it is Marxian. This book, consisting of a collection of articles written by extremely competent observers of the Soviet intellectual development, seeks to elucidate the question.

It is repeatedly stressed in these essays that Soviet thought began to depart from the orthodoxy of Marxism before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, as Lenin, substituting the Bolshevik concept of voluntarism for the Marxist determinism, advocated the theory of a disciplined party elite. The works of Marx and Engels were mainly limited to condemnation of capitalism as it existed in their times, with the exception of a brief suggestion that socialism was the only alternative for a better society. Since they failed to deal with the specific processes by which socialism was to be brought about, Soviet Communist thought has drawn heavily from the past Russian experience to create a link between theory and practice. If the Soviet objectives are still Marxian in substance, the methods to carry them out have been distinctly Russian. Although the messianic thinking of slavophilism may differ from that of the Marxist-Leninist universalism in scope and purposes, their effects on the Soviet expansionist policy, as well as on the peoples who are subjected to their influence, are substantially the same.

The authors seem to agree that the economic backwardness of a society makes its intellegentsia more susceptible to a radical ideology than the one of a highly industrialized society, and that rapid industrialization and low per capita consumption necessarily sustain the continuous growth of radical thinking. It is noteworthy that as a result of progressing industrialization and improved standards of living, the sway of Marxism over the minds of the Soviet intellegentsia has been gradually weakened.

I-KUA CHOU

JAPAN'S MODERN CENTURY. By Hugh Borton. *Ronald.* $7.00.

The last decade or so has been relatively rich in scholarly works on Japan, some of which have been more appropriate for the lay reader, other for the specialist. Dr. Borton, who is certainly one of the most eminently qualified scholars on Japan, has struck a happy compromise between the needs of the general reader for a clearly written chronicle and the needs of the specialist for a balanced and authoritative repository of information.

His book is a solid but readable, comprehensive yet summary, well-organized and well-executed study of Japan's metamorphosis from a secluded agrarian state to a world power, its thrust for Asian supremacy, and its adjustments in the last decade to the changes brought by defeat and occupation. It is invaluable not only as a source of understanding Japan in its contemporary context, but also as a reference work whose utility is enhanced by the devices the author employs to facilitate the chronicling of the complicated and often confused history of Japan. Chronological tables, chapter-end footnotes, a bibliographic section, appendices, plus selected illustrations, maps and statistical tables make this a wonderfully complete work without impairing the flow of the exposition.

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CITIES IN THE WILDERNESS: The First Century of Urban Life in America, 1625-1742. By Carl Bridenbaugh. Illustrated. *Knopf. $6.75.*

CITIES IN REVOLT: Urban Life in America, 1743-1776. By Carl Bridenbaugh. Illustrated. *Knopf. $7.50.*

No one interested in American history can afford to forego reading Carl Bridenbaugh's studies of urban life in colonial America. *Cities in the Wilderness,* covering the rise of "a genuine urban society" between the founding of New Amsterdam in 1625 and the year 1742, tells a story that dispels forever the widely held illusion that the frontiersman and the farmer dominated the thinking and controlled the economic development of the seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century colonies of British North America. In still more dramatic fashion, *Cities in Revolt* unfolds the tale of the growing influence and the accompanying tribulations of the five principal American seaports during the years between 1743 and 1776. It is scarcely too much to say that only by understanding wherein and how Boston, Newport, New York, Philadelphia and Charles Town took the lead first in promoting colonial prosperity, then in combating the depression of the postwar era, 1761-76, and throughout in fostering taste, spreading education and creating awareness of community responsibility for care of the helpless —only, in short, by perceiving the importance of distinctively urban forces in shaping the United States to-be, can the student justly appraise later periods of American history.

Both books, for all their learning, deserve a wider audience than that of scholars alone. Both volumes contain valuable bibliographical notes, but *Cities in Revolt* omits the paraphernalia of footnotes. The texts provide meaty but not indigestable fare, frequently spiced by wit. Charming and informing illustrations add further flavor. Specific details—for example, the "good teeth and eyes . . . delicate hands and tolerable legs" that a Philadelphian listed as essentials in any housemaid he would employ —give each narrative at once color and substance, while analytical passages explain how the sharp differentiation between city and rural areas came about in the seventeenth century and why the urban centers of the mid-eighteenth century sparked the Revolution.

CONSTANCE MCL. GREEN

THREE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR BOOKS: The Reading of Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt. By Arthur Bestor, David G. Mearns, Jonathan Daniels. *Illinois. $2.50.*

This little book, consisting of three lectures delivered at the University of Illinois, ushers us into the libraries of three famous men and shows us some of the fare on which their minds fed.

Considering his times, Jefferson's library was much the largest, and Professor Bestor's piece about it and his tastes in reading is naturally the richest of the three. Indeed, the author is to be congratulated on compressing so much into so little space. Mr. Mearns has less to work with. He agrees with Herndon that Lincoln "read less and thought more than any man of his standing in America, if not in the world," but he finds much good sense as well as humor in what Lincoln said about books, and writes a discerning and entertaining chapter. Mr. Daniels treats Roosevelt in less space than is taken by either of the other writers and is rather less specific. He makes it abundantly clear, however, that F. D. R. read with enormous zest, as well as enormous speed.

One of the many merits of this book is that each of the authors, besides being familiar with the reading of his man, has an admirable understanding of his personality. It is a genuine pleasure to visit these three libraries under their guidance.

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TINKERS AND GENIUS: The Story of the Yankee Inventors. By Edmund Fuller. Illustrated. *Hastings House. $4.50.*

In this addition to the "American Procession Series," Mr. Fuller sketches the efflorescence of mechanical genius in New England between the Revolution and the Civil War. In a sense, it is a popularization of Dirk Struik's *Yankee Science in the Making.*

Although Mr. Fuller limits himself to inventions and the personalities behind them, his keen eye for the picturesque anecdote never diverts him from the solid facts. His expositions of technical problems, whether in textile making or in navigation, are always lucid and easy to follow. For at least one reader, he has made clear, for the first time, the respective parts played by John Fitch, James Rumsey and Robert Fulton in the creation of the steamboat. Moreover, he has a sure touch in selecting from original sources the passages which illuminate not only techniques but economic history—for instance, Chauncey Jerome's account of his methods of producing a workable clock to sell for less than a dollar.

Though he focuses on personalities, Mr. Fuller does not exaggerate their influence. He realizes that sooner or later steamboats would have been invented, rubber vulcanized, cotton ginned, even if Fulton, Goodyear and Whitney had died, as did Fitch, in obscurity and defeat. So America would have been discovered without Columbus. But that fact does not make the story of Columbus any the less interesting.

DeLancey Ferguson

ARCHITECTURE, AMBITION AND AMERICANS. By Wayne Andrews. *Harper. $7.50.*

It has often been said that architecture is a reflection of the way of life which produced it. In his new book, Wayne Andrews shows that two of the requirements for the development of great architecture are prosperity and taste. This book is a somewhat detailed history of important buildings in America and tells the story of the men who were responsible for them.

In the eighteenth-century South, the wealthy planter was often his own architect, but he depended on books imported from England for his inspiration and on itinerant builders for its execution. This process helped to perpetuate the formal plan and the ideals of aristocracy.

Although New England was prosperous, its love of beauty was somewhat tempered by the restrictions of the Puritan tradition, which tended toward a more democratic society and resulted in a less formal architecture.

The Middle West, because of its geographic position, was less influenced by European taste. It was, therefore, thrown on its own resources and developed a creative expression of its own. At the turn of the twentieth century, it became the cradle of contemporary American architecture.

Mr. Andrews makes some stimulating comments on the state of architecture in America today and divides modern architects into two sects: Veblenites, the disciples of Veblen's ascetic edicts, and Jacobites, the followers of William James with his greater tolerance of the more abundant life.

Waldron Faulkner

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES. By Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger. *Columbia. $5.50.*

ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN OUR TIME. By Robert M. MacIver. *Columbia. $4.00.*

These are indispensable books for any teacher, administrator or trustee who wishes fully to comprehend the history and present position of the most important principle animating higher education in the United States. The authors' central concern is, of course, the idea and practice of academic freedom. But their range is in fact much larger; the information and interpretation given also constitute a significant commentary upon the relationship of the intellect to the changing power structure in American society.

The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States opens with a survey of the European heritage: ideas of freedom,

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love of knowledge and tolerance—their emergence, victories and defeats. There follows an account of Harvard and other early colleges which substitutes interesting history for the dull mythology most of us have come by, and furnishes a sound base for study of the colleges and universities of our own day. The second part of this volume, "The Age of the University," explores the explosive force of the shift in educational purpose from conservation of knowledge—generally a safe assignment—to extension of knowledge, with all its attendant dangers for the teacher who tells society there may be better ways to run its business.

Academic Freedom in Our Time understandably turns from historical narrative to preponderantly sociological analysis and to discussion of recent leading cases. MacIver is particularly helpful in pointing out that the institutional freedom of the college and the professional freedom of the scholar are in truth aspects of that larger functional freedom by which the "university idea" imparts and advances knowledge.

The only over-all weakness results, paradoxically, from the healthy independence with which the authors have written. At times questions are raised, or answered, in one place without relating them to their consideration, or lack of consideration, in another. A greater degree of merely structural integration would have been helpful.

A collateral note is in order. Recent reviews of the MacIver volume by Sidney Hook (*New York Times*) and Harry D. Gideonse (*New Leader*) are sharply critical. This reviewer believes that those adverse notices result mainly from the refusal of MacIver to take as seriously as some other persons the infiltration of education by communism, and from his further refusal to make the absolute categorical judgment that every Communist is certainly and fatally not a free man. The first refusal is, of course, presently a matter of opinion; nobody has yet devised the needed instrument of measurement. The second refusal is justified to the degree that one may properly reject any absolute judgment as unscientific and unhistorical.

And a final note is due the sponsor whose gift made possible these extensive studies. His own schooling ended when he was a child because necessity forced him to work with his hands. But no reader of these books will excel him in understanding their meaning or in loving the institutions which academic freedom safeguards.

LOUIS JOUGHIN

FACTS TO A CANDID WORLD. By Oren Stephens. *Stanford.* $3.50.

Both the "citizen-generalist" and a fairly wide variety of specialists will find this enthusiastic book about the United States's overseas information program interesting, and at times even somewhat fervid. To historians it carries the story of the development of America's organized governmental information program; to philosophers it outlines the rationale, justification, and the ethical imperatives supporting the effort; to practicing politicians it presents the example of an operating and rather successful program, a program which deserves both Congressional and electoral support; to students of public administration it offers by implication the somewhat novel conception that the professional propagandist may be about to inherit the dominant position in the progression of professions which have directed "administration"—formerly occupied by academicians, lawyers, military men and, more currently, by businessmen; and to the propagandist, or even the potential employee of government in this field, it offers a dedicated outline for development and progress (including thoughtful advocacy for occasional "un-action"), a careful statement of objectives, and a somewhat missionary stimulus to action.

If it indeed happens that the military solution to international problems becomes substantially nullified, then it may be surmised, perhaps surprisingly, that the public opinion approaches described and partly envisioned in this book will become one of the most important international tools of the nation.

W. H. CHAPMAN

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FURTHER SPECULATIONS BY T. E. HULME. Edited by Sam Hynes. *Minnesota. $4.50.*

This potpourri of philosophical essays, literary criticism, art reviews, poems and fragments of poems by the "father of Imagism," reveals that conjunction of the erratic and the brilliant frequently meet in the amateur. It reflects a mind insatiate for knowledge and always conscious of time's wingéd chariot at its back. The chariot was closer than Hulme supposed: he was killed in battle in 1917 at the age of thirty-four.

Admitting to "a certain coarseness in my nature" because of his inability to appreciate the stoic's insistence upon the heightened dignity of human ideals, Hulme termed this attitude "inhuman." He was insensitive to the idea that the cry for meaning in a world that is conceived to lack it is the most human of all qualities. Perhaps his impatience with this "irritating sloppiness" lies partly in his unnecessary disjunction of mechanism and the belief in absolute values. He might have been less harsh in his judgment had he understood that contextual and not categorical values are generally intended by those who believe that man imposes his own ideals upon an indifferent cosmos.

But there is an element of pathos in Hulme's work. He had concluded that in the creation of significant art "the central idea is nothing," it is the multiplicity of detail that is required; and in him there was the ever present awareness that between his conception and his creation there fell the shadow.

RICHARD HUETT

THE LETTERS OF GEORGE SANTAYANA. Edited, with an introduction and commentary, by Daniel Cory. *Scribner's. $7.50.*

Professor Cory's edition of his friend's correspondence is a remarkably skillful work. It presents Santayana's versatile and prolific genius in the form of a life-continuity of varied personal interests and literary enterprises. Some of these are emotional tones which are seen to appear and disappear. Follow, for example, the development of his novel, *The Last Puritan,* or the creative excursion into poetry, or simply his relations to family and friends. Each in itself is a complete story and beckons a witness to the experience.

Other themes reveal a more essential individuality. Besides a persistent intellectual honesty, there is always present a poignant sense of criticism and humor. Santayana writes, for instance: "I think to be born under Bolshevism would not be worse than to be born in Boston: it would have its virtues, although not always those which we may personally be most inclined to practice." Two of his personal virtues involved a faithful fulfillment of his Latin heritage and a Platonic insistence on the philosopher's role as "spectator of all time and existence." It is interesting to see how these and other virtues were felt to be ascertainable only through self-imposed exile from America; interesting, that is, to anyone concerned with how a "life of reason" may be coupled with a "sense of beauty."

LEWIS A. FOSTER, JR.

CELLS AND SOCIETIES. By John Tyler Bonner. *Princeton. $4.50.*

The last science *not* to be lively should be that which deals with life itself. All one has to do to make it lively is to begin with the activities of familiar and highly visible living organisms. This, unfortunately, is not the usual procedure, as thousands of college graduates can testify. Small wonder that there is complaint in high circles about the shortage of recruits to the field of science!

Professor Bonner, well known as a competent and articulate scientist, teaches biology to the young gentlemen of Princeton. He modestly claims no phenomenal success, but *Cells and Societies,* a book for the general reader, suggests that he is on the right track. He begins by drawing on such master naturalists as Carpenter, Darling and Wheeler who have studied animal societies. Compactly and with rare skill, he describes the personal, family and group behavior of monkey troops, fur seals, red deer and social insects.

From there, he moves downward to the

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less familiar colonial organisms, such as corals, and deliberately on into the microscopic world of cells. Like a good surveyor, he goes into details only after latitude and longitude are known and perspective established. With the range of biological organization set forth, from familiar to unfamiliar, from large to minute, he then outlines the various aspects of behavior and process by which living individuals use energy and material to sustain and adjust themselves, winding up with too brief a chapter on human culture.

This is an excellent luncheon, satisfying to palate and immediate appetite, while stimulating the thought of dinner.

PAUL B. SEARS

ON THE TRACK OF PREHISTORIC MAN. By Herbert Kühn. Translated from the German by Alan Houghton Broderick. Illustrated. *Random House. $3.95.*

This is not an archaelogical fact-book, but rather it is an enthusiastic account of the early art viewed by the author on a tour of twelve prehistoric sites in France and Spain. Primary emphasis is given to the origins and history of this art and to consideration of what it represents—man's concern with birth, survival, death and the hereafter.

First-person discussions between Professor Kühn and people directly concerned with each "find" enable the reader not only to follow the story, but often to share in the excitement of the initial discovery. The problems and methods of dating early art are discussed, old controversies rehashed, and broad speculations as to the life and thoughts of Ice Age Man are evolved. From examination of small artifacts at La Laugerie Basse, the spectacular paintings at Altamira, the revealing strata and outlined hands at El Castillo, the long-ignored paintings at Marsoulas, the beginnings of representative art at Cabrerets, the postglacial abstractions at Minateda and the collection of paintings at the Niaux grottoes, the author reviews stylistic aspects of prehistoric art and considers the modern parallels.

Professor Kühn has carefully indicated the chronology of geologic periods and epochs, thereby immensely aiding the lay reader. The many photographs and sketches offer ample justification for the enthusiasm with which he describes the work of early man. The author offers the reader a stimulating introduction to the science of prehistory, a science which "allows us to glance into the depths . . . of our remote past," thus extending his view of the historical continuity of man.

MARIAN CHAPMAN

THE SCROLLS FROM THE DEAD SEA. By Edmund Wilson. Illustrated. *Oxford. $3.25.*
THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS. By Millar Burrows. Illustrated. *Viking. $6.50.*

The now famous Dead Sea Scrolls, first brought to the attention of the world in the spring of 1948, did not attract much interest until a violent controversy broke out about their age and authenticity. While this storm raged among scholars [see THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR: Winter, 1952-53, pp. 77-85], new caves were found and cleared. The systematic excavation of the Essene "community center" by Père Roland de Vaux, O.P., has linked the caves together and established their chronology beyond doubt.

Both of these new books are excellent. To Edmund Wilson belongs the credit for a brilliant and painstaking journalistic effort which has accomplished what specialists could not: the creation of a tidal wave of interest in the Scrolls, almost unparalleled in American humanistic annals. Actually, Wilson's standards of journalism are so high that he has surpassed most "experts" in the care and patience which he has devoted to following clues and mastering the now extensive literature on the Scrolls. Like a good journalist, however, he picks out the most colorful students of the Scrolls to describe, and the net effect on the average reader is to give him one-sided impressions which do not always reflect the real picture.

Millar Burrows' book is several times as large as the little volume by Edmund Wilson; it is the work of an exceedingly careful scholar, well known among his colleagues for good judgment—but a good

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judgment which is sometimes betrayed by its very excess of caution. Burrows controls the material well; it was he who, together with his students at the American School in Jerusalem, Drs. John C. Trever and William H. Brownlee, studied and published the first three Scrolls from Cave I. He gives us a fascinating account of the discovery of Cave I and the subsequent controversies; he translates the Scrolls in large part and comments on the contributions to our knowledge which they make; and he convincingly marshals the evidence now available for identifying the new Jewish sect with the Essenes of Josephus and Philo. So far the book is in every way admirable. At this point, however, he becomes the victim of his good qualities, and thus fails to give an adequate impression of the extraordinary horizons opened up by the new finds and illustrated by a mass of subsequently published or described material. Since we now possess the fragmentary remains of some four hundred manuscripts, three-fourths of which are non-Biblical, it is obvious that there remains a herculean task of assembling and deciphering before the real work of interpretation begins.

It is now certain that the Dead Sea Scrolls are revolutionizing our approach to Old Testament textual criticism and to New Testament background, chronology and interpretation. The elaborate structure of historico-literary criticism of the New Testament, built up by a century of radical scholarship, is already being irretrievably destroyed. This new literature fills in the immediate background of earliest Christianity, constructing a solid historical bridge between the Old and New Testaments.

W. F. ALBRIGHT

THE NEZ PERCÉS: Tribesmen of the Columbia Plateau. By Francis Haines. *Oklahoma. $5.00.*

The Nez Percé—a North American Indian tribe which occupied the upper Columbia River Basin area and was first seen by white men in 1805—underwent many cultural changes after the introduction of the horse. If the reader knows nothing of this tribe, this is a good place to start. Professor Haines knows their land from personal experience there and writes as an historian free from ethnological jargon.

This is the best history of the Nez Percé yet to appear. Sources for the book are the Lewis and Clark journals, various standard and popularized monographs, and the author's own research on the diffusion of the horse in North America. Professor Haines's account of the cultural change undergone by certain Nez Percé groups during a period of six years in which they shifted from being a sedentary, isolated tribe of fishing Indians to seminomadic buffalo hunters will appeal to students of acculturation.

The practical considerations back of the Indian's request for the white man's religion show some of the motivation for change. They wanted the white man's superior "magic" for they hoped it would restore Nez Percé prestige and power. They looked for profitable incantations to use on earth, not information on any possible world to come.

The next edition wants an adequate map of the "deep pocket . . . between the parent Bitterroots and the two westward-sweeping spurs . . . part of the Snake and Salmon valleys, and all of the Clearwater drainage . . ." where these intelligent, inquisitive Indians lived. Some readers probably have not been there.

SYDNEY CONNOR

THE GREAT MOTHER: An Analysis of the Archtype. By Erich Neumann. Translated from the German by Ralph Manheim. Illustrated. Bollingen Series. *Pantheon. $7.50.*

The author, an analytical psychologist, following the theories of Dr. Jung, chooses to discuss "the primordial image of the Great Mother—an image at work in the human psyche, yet finding outward expression in the . . . art of early man and in . . . the creative works . . . of man of our own day. . . ."

One Jungian theory appears to postulate that similar images are evoked by all mankind in all times and places. Dr. Neumann presents the "Great Mother" as one of the so-called archtypes and an ubiquitous figure in art. He attempts to prove his points in

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a large volume which some may find to be rather heavy going, despite a manifestly thorough translation.

Even in this complex presentation, there is a great deal of oversimplification and arbitrary selection. One must follow Dr. Neumann with a wary step. Sumerian cylinder seals of the third millenium before Christ and East Indian sculpture of the nineteenth Christian century may both illustrate some version of a Mother Goddess figure. True. It is somewhat disturbing, however, to find monuments, produced by cultures which were thousands of years apart in time or thousands of miles distant from one another geographically, taken from their proper context and jumbled together on the strength of surface resemblance.

One would first have to prove that *Eanna-Ishtar* of the ancient Near East meant the same thing five thousand years ago as the later Hindu nature goddess before some of the author's parallels could be fully underwritten. Such proof is not forthcoming, although Dr. Neumann has ranged far afield, in the tradition of Frazer's *Golden Bough*, in his search for examples.

Many of the illustrations will be unfamiliar to an English-reading public, and since the author has made use of previous Bollingen publications, the plate references are more consistently accurate than is usually the case with a non-art historical work.

JOHN F. HASKINS

HOGARTH'S PROGRESS. By Peter Quennell. Illustrated. *Viking. $6.50.*

A lively description of the neighborhood around St. Bartholomew's Church, in which Hogarth spent his youth, opens the story of his career. Intimately one meets the extraordinary medley of gentry and rabble jostling each other as they do in Hogarth's famous prints. Mother Needham, Col. Chartres, Mary Tofts and many more picturesque and infamous characters are featured. Especially successful in reanimating the lusty, passionate, often cruel society of Augustan London, the book offers also an admirable visualization of the districts Hogarth knew and used for his backgrounds. The bitter controversies over artistic taste and party politics, in which as an "original" the artist embroiled himself, are excellently outlined.

The art historian may be somewhat disappointed because the book makes no effort to include all that is demanded by the specialist, nor is it adequately illustrated to satisfy his approach. A few inaccuracies are present: Hogarth's coloring does not anticipate Delacroix's, despite the quotation from Sir William [*sic*] Armstrong; Hogarth found confirmation for his theory of beauty in a remark attributed to Michelangelo, not to Leonardo; the prototype of the Venus in "The Analysis of Beauty," Plate 1, is not the "Cnidian Aphrodite." But these are small imperfections, overshadowed by the witty, anecdotal style which vividly re-creates Hogarth's life and times.

GROSE EVANS

VICTORIAN PEOPLE: A Reassessment of Persons and Themes, 1851-1867. By Asa Briggs. *Chicago. $5.00.*

The polar events of this informed study are the creation of the Crystal Palace and the creation of the Second Reform Bill. Between these symbols of material achievement and well-being on the one hand and, on the other, popular political aspiration and the English adaptability to reform, Mr. Briggs arranges nine men who express conflicting intellectual, political and social tendencies interacting to modify the pattern of the mid-Victorian period. His own metaphor for these years is "a plateau"; his purpose is to define its configurations. Mr. Briggs's eminent Victorians, like Mr. Lytton Strachey's, are frequently not the established figures of nineteenth-century intellectual and social history. Yet, the prominence given to men like Samuel Smiles, Thomas Hughes and Robert Applegarth is justified by the pattern of the study and by the sympathy and persuasiveness of the presentation. Trollope, a familiar figure, enjoys the fresh perspective of political thinker rather than novelist.

Although the themes—the gospel of work, adaptation in political life in an era of reform, the strengthening of trade union-

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ism, the hopes and fears for democracy—are expressed primarily through representative men, Mr. Briggs skillfully uses biography without being biographical, anecdote without being anecdotal. The focus is steadily kept on the development of political and social attitudes.

Where unfamiliar material is so well introduced it may be inappropriate to wish that Mr. Briggs had shown his Victorian people in relation to more familiar thinkers of the period or to wish for a work that is descriptive rather than evaluative. It bespeaks the sympathy and enthusiasm of Mr. Briggs's study that the reader regrets the absence of footnotes to lead him more specifically to the writings of these men, and that, although the reader is grateful for the bibliographical note, he could wish it yet more extensive.

FRASER NEIMAN

THE RUNGLESS LADDER: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism. By Charles H. Foster. *Duke. $4.50.*

On the basis of his Rousseauistic-Platonic conception of art as morally uplifting to the masses of humanity, and perhaps also in an effort *épater les intellectuels,* Tolstoy once declared his preference of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to all the works of Shakespeare. From well-intentioned charities of this sort, Mrs. Stowe has found it hard to recover in the minds of literate readers, who are content to take her upon faith as a force more important in the social history of the United States than in its intellectual or literary history. Difficulties still remain in the way, in spite of the efforts made by men like Van Wyck Brooks, Edmund Wilson, F. O. Matthiessen and others to reinstate her work (particularly her New England novels) in the esteem of the sophisticated.

To this effort of aesthetic restoration, the present volume appears to be an important addition. Mr. Foster writes of Mrs. Stowe's books with enthusiasm, sensitivity and understanding. He judges in favor of almost all she wrote—even her *Lady Byron Vindicated,* which has generally passed for sensational scandal-mongering but which, to her sympathetic critic, seems to have "inaugurated the modern study of one of the major romantic poets." In fact, he claims for Mrs. Stowe a title to blazing trails "sometimes crudely" which lead variously, on the side of language and on that of subject matter, to the work of Henry James, Mark Twain and Robert Frost. These are large assertions to make, but the facts and reasons Mr. Foster adduces for regarding Mrs. Stowe as (with the exception of Hawthorne) "New England's most revealing native novelist" will bear looking into.

MILTON HINDUS

MARCEL PROUST AND DELIVERANCE FROM TIME. By Germaine Brée. Translated from the French by C. J. Richards and A. D. Truitt. *Rutgers. $4.50.*

As everyone who has followed him to the end of the last volume knows, Proust's hero finally comes to see how the workings of involuntary memory can permit him to recreate the past, free it from time, and fix it in a work of art. For Miss Brée this ultimate "epiphany" is the key to the entire novel, through which all its themes and episodes are related and from which they derive their definitive meaning; this key unlocks Proust's "world."

Her book is meant for the reader who already knows Proust well enough to know that he would like to know him better. By devoting herself entirely to explicating the interrelationships of character and event as revealed in "The Past Recaptured," she furnishes him a remarkably explicit and complete demonstration of the structural unity of *Remembrance of Things Past.* Such concentration on one aspect of the novel naturally obscures some of its other excellences. The mere fact that Proust had won a large audience several years before the publication of his final volume made it possible to see how the over-all structure had been conceived, attests that the parts have a texture and life of their own without reference to the whole. But such aspects are more easily accessible to the unaided reader. Miss Brée steps in to guide him through the most difficult paths to understanding.

An extremely adequate, if not uniformly smooth, translation thus makes available a

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valuable book which has enjoyed a solid place of its own in Proust criticism for several years.

W. M. FROHOCK

THE STATURE OF THEODORE DREISER. Edited by Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro, with an introduction by Alfred Kazin. *Indiana. $5.00.*

The decline of Dreiser's reputation is connected with the revival of Henry James's as symptomatic of a change in intellectual climate that began with World War II. Dreiser, however, is not a figure to be permanently ignored. That is the point this book makes by reprinting enough diverse comments on him—friends' reminiscences of him, the first newspaper reviews of *Sister Carrie,* essays fighting the battle over Dreiser and naturalism, and essays analyzing his thought and art—to show his inescapable relevance. Thus, Mr. Kazin can say in his introduction the kind of thing that was said about Dreiser in 1901: "At a time when the one quality which so many American writers have in common is their utter harmlessness, Dreiser makes painful reading . . . he stupefies with reality."

Friend and foe agree that Dreiser writes badly, that he is ignorant, naïve, vulgar, even in a certain sense stupid. The question is whether these qualities are or are not, in his case, literary advantages—a uniquely American and democratic question. As examples of one side of the controversy, we have Stuart Sherman's attack on Dreiser's "Barbaric Naturalism," and Lionel Trilling's attack on that conception of reality as antithetical to mind which has made Dreiser so appealing to liberals in spite of, indeed because of, his faults. As examples of the other side, we have Mencken lamenting only that Dreiser is not destructive enough; Sherwood Anderson arguing that crudity is appropriate to American literature; and Saul Bellow finding, in Dreiser's superiority to mere tidiness in style and in the novelistic "handling" of life, "The Triumph of Art." Whatever side of the controversy we take, the detailed studies of Dreiser by Malcolm Cowley, Robert Elias, F. O. Matthiessen, Eliseo Vivas and others should show how much there is in him to go back to. And it was to send us back that the editors compiled this volume.

ROBERT LANGBAUM

JAPANESE LITERATURE: An Introduction for Western Readers. By Donald Keene. *Grove. Cloth $2.50, paper $1.00.*

The war between Japan and the United States has had some surprising cultural consequences. In the course of training young men to fight an enemy with an obscure language, a large and talented new generation of Japanese scholars was developed. In all probability Donald Keene would be an authority on Japan even if he had not been an oustanding graduate of the Navy school at Boulder; but it is doubtful whether his book would ever have been so much needed or appreciated if Japan had not taken on military and political importance for the United States, and thereby become an object of cultural curiosity for thousands of ordinary Americans. For such readers this book is admirable. Although it goes into some fairly esoteric detail, it is written in the direct, personal style of good literary criticism, and it illustrates its points with helpful comparisons to ideas and forms familiar in Western literature. Japanese poetry, drama and the novel, the main subdivisions of the book, are large and fascinating aspects of Japanese literature, and the whole subject itself has not received so much attention since W. G. Aston published his *History of Japanese Literature* in 1899.

Dr. Keene is persuasive in pointing out that the Japanese *haiku, no* play, and novel, although they lack precision and organization by Western standards, deserve to rank with the world's great literature and that Japanese literature is by no means an imitation of ancient Chinese or modern Western models. On the contrary, Keene shows how the basic characteristics of Japanese literature—its subtle understatement, impressionism and meaningful omissions—have been an inspiration to modern Western writers. This point seems particularly well taken at a time when Japanese ideas of simplicity and naturalness are becoming

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apparent in American art, architecture and even in gardening and stagecraft. But Japanese houses, movies and even *kabuki* dancers are more easily imported into our culture than Japanese literature. Now that Keene's own *Anthology of Japanese Literature* and some excellent translations of modern novels have appeared, this study should be a valuable guide.

DALLAS FINN

THE POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON: Including Variant Readings Critically Compared with All Known Manuscripts. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson. Three volumes. Illustrated. *Harvard. $25.00.*

EMILY DICKINSON: An Interpretive Biography. By Thomas H. Johnson. *Harvard. $4.50.*

The term "definitive" is suspect, and might be especially so in the case of the Dickinson poems, but as of now it is undoubtedly applicable to the three extraordinary volumes in which Mr. Johnson brings into port, at last, the whole flotilla of versions. One of the outstanding works in the scholarship of American literature, it is so lucid in organization that even poets can find their way unhindered through the ordered and intriguing maze. Besides the great body of the poems, 1,775 of them, there are exhaustive appendices containing such fascinating material as biographical sketches of poem recipients, the "packets" by chronological arrangement, unpublished poems, and titles of poems, 24 only, supplied by Emily herself. The ample introductory sections, "Creating the Poems" and "Editing the Poems: 1890-1945," are concentrates of his other book.

This Dickinson biography is the most sane and sound since the George F. Whicher life sixteen years ago. Mr. Johnson's principal contribution concerns the spiritual tradition of the Connecticut Valley, where Emily's people had lived unto the eighth generation. Her inability to conform religiously he likens to that of Jonathan Edwards, dismissed from his church for subtle metaphysical differences: "Not the least of the paradoxes in her life is the fact that she was closer to the Edwardean core of thought . . . than were many of the orthodoxies preached in the Valley."

Mr. Johnson's grasp of Emily's growingly compulsive seclusion could hardly be bettered. With the poet's necessity for preservation of complete integrity of mind and being went also, perhaps, "an element of the neurotic," but "the fact seems clear that she was possessed to a most uncommon degree by emotional responses so acute as to be painful to herself and to others." And, since all of life was drama to her, there was also something which "can be associated with the stage fright of actors and the self-indulgence of prima donnas."

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

PAINTED LACE. By Gertrude Stein. With an introduction by Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. *Yale. $5.00.*

"I have no title to be successful," Gertrude Stein wrote in 1915; and if she believed it—though in fact Gertrude Stein's own confidence in Gertrude Stein's own future rarely flagged—it was one of her few errors. Now, going on half a century later, as if to chide her, this piece, with eighty others, appears in the fifth volume of the Yale edition of her unpublished writings. Her old friends are presented in word portraits: Sylvia Beach, Man Ray, the Sitwells, the Baronne Pierlot. Here are intimations of *Four Saints in Three Acts*, *Tender Buttons* and the gossipy, flavorsome *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. Here, in brief, is the familiar verbal magic. It had been missing in some of these posthumous volumes, but on many of these pages it returns at full strength: the grand, mysterious eloquence, provocative and tantalizing, a regular Steinese puzzle, but easily soluble by the sympathetic reader.

Along with the Steinese, Kahnweiler's introduction provides important Steiniana. He met the Steins, Leo and Michael as well as Gertrude, at Matisse's; and several of his publishing projects involved Miss Stein, Picasso and Juan Gris. But like so many who have written about her work, he comes back at the end to her, the dynamic, unforgettable, lovable woman.

W. G. ROGERS

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles which have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: The Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington 9, D.C. Because of limitations of space, we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

Man and Science

The inclusion of the articles by Professors Krutch and Skinner in the Winter issue must evoke some response from one unrepresented area of human society. Professor Skinner claims that all of society's ills will be solved by his "science." Professor Krutch claims that all of society's ills are caused by science. These seem to be diametrically opposed views, but with the aid of a little bit of semantics, commonly called "the meaning of meaning," the argument can be resolved with little comfort to both proponents. Professor Krutch says that scientists propose that they can solve the world's problems. Professor Skinner says that scientists are able to solve all human problems. I therefore propose that all physical scientists and engineers resign themselves to being called philosophers (as in the past ages) and leave the word *science* to those who have jumped on its coattails in the last twenty-five years. By substituting the word *psychologist, political scientist* or *social scientist* for the word *scientist* in Professor Krutch's article, I find myself in 95 per cent agreement with Professor Krutch. On the other hand, even the mention of science or scientist in every paragraph of Professor Skinner's article does not prevent my complete rejection of not only his thesis, but the words between the lines in his thesis. Perhaps I should explain what my field is. I have a couple of engineering degrees and am at present in research. Needless to say, it is in the physical sciences.

Perhaps an explanation is due both professors for the foregoing harsh language. Professor Krutch sees his world changing and changing rapidly. The most obvious of these changes is that of atomic energy. Science brought about the possibility of the use of atomic energy, but the number of scientists desiring the use of atomic energy as atomic bombs is probably very small. Study the reaction of General Groves at Almagordo and the situation becomes much clearer. On the other hand, Professor Krutch is much too ready to accept as a scientist one who claims himself to be one. I believe that the average scientist is one who is in research; and, when questioned, that average scientist will emphasize very heavily the "re" as well as the "search." Very seldom will he offer quick panaceas. That is the function of the advertising man who has allied himself, for gain, with the scientist or scientific laboratory.

Professor Skinner can best be answered by quoting portions of his essay and answering them. He says: "By promoting certain tendencies to admire and censure, the group of which we are a part has arranged for the social reinforcement and punishment needed to assure a high level of intellectual and moral industry."

I am sorry, but I do not drive a 1956 Buick, so I assume that I shall be punished by my group. Of course, it is odd that none of my immediate associates drives even a 1953 Buick, Pontiac or Chevrolet, but perhaps future indoctrination will take care of that. At present, this tendency to admire and censure in society seems centered on the drive to consume more new automobiles, so

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I must assume this consumption means a higher level of intellectual and moral industry.

Professor Skinner also says: "Under other and possibly better controlling systems, the behavior which we now admire would occur, but not under those conditions which make it admirable, and we should have no reason to admire it because the culture would have arranged for its maintenance in other ways."

One way to control the system as it so imperfectly works now, is to make mandatory at the age of five a thoroughgoing prefrontal lobotomy. This would no doubt simplify the problem of the control of man as much as it simplifies the man. Professor Skinner (provided he was not operated upon) could then establish a Science of Man as he now supposes he has done. The difficulty that he now runs into is that control of an experiment usually presupposes that the experimenter has a greater intellect than those experimented upon.

GILBERT W. BETT
Corning, New York

Winter Issue

Your new cover is quite attractive, and my reaction to the Winter issue as a whole is, as usual, one of excitement. Your descriptive subtitle, "A Quarterly for the Independent Thinker," continues to be appropriate in relation to the articles and editorial judgment. You are doing an excellent job. Keep it up.

From the impressive array of articles found in the Winter issue (and one is impressed both before and after reading), it is difficult to select the best. It is certainly a question of "which is better?" rather than one of "good and bad," for all are distinguished not only in that something of vital importance is said, but also that it is said exceedingly well. For myself, I invariably find that Erich Fromm's vivid prose and insightful thinking are provocative, to say the least, and here again he has demonstrated this. I'm in wholehearted agreement with your method of obtaining these articles—that is, your hands-off policy of refusing to dictate either topic or treatment to the authors. "This Literary Generation," by Robert Langbaum is very well done. The subject has been beaten bloody by nearly every active present-day critic, but Mr. Langbaum's essay is more comprehensive and pointed than any I have seen. Following his thesis, I wonder why THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR doesn't throw its hat in the ring by printing at least one short story per issue?

CLEO X. CALDERWOOD
Portland, Oregon

* * *

I thought the Winter issue was outstanding. I read it through at least twice—something I don't generally do with magazines. The articles by Max Lerner, Niebuhr, Fromm and Krutch were tops. Give us more outstanding issues like this.

CARL HENRY
Maysville, Kentucky

* * *

The new cover is even better than the old—and the contents *the best* ever!

MARGARET SIDNEY
New Orleans, Louisiana

* * *

The Winter issue is the finest I have read. I have spent many hours in Great Books discussions; this recent issue was the equivalent of another such discussion by scholars who expressed themselves in challenging paragraphs. The magazine causes me to believe that there may be hope for us after all.

THOMAS J. O'NEILL
Denver, Colorado

* * *

Your Winter issue was excellent. B. F. Skinner's article, "Freedom and the Control of Men," I enjoyed most of all. I liked what he said and the way he said it. The new cover is good. More power to you!

A. JAMES VOORHEES
Springfield, Massachusetts

* * *

I think the Winter issue is one of the best I have ever seen of this type of publication. The articles are all good.

SAMUEL J. PEARLMAN
Chicago, Illinois

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The Winter issue is excellent. I was particularly impressed by the Niebuhr and Fromm articles. Concentration on single issues of vital concern is quite exciting.

CATHERINE CATER
Moorhead, Minnesota

* * *

I like the new format very much. The articles covering "The Human Situation Today" are very interesting, and in particular the one entitled "The Present Human Condition" by Erich Fromm.

J. EARL FRAZIER
Washington, Pennsylvania

Japanese Intellectuals

In her article "What the Japanese Intellectuals Are Thinking" [AS: Autumn, 1955], Mrs. Dallas Finn explains the relationship between the current anti-Americanism and the Communist leanings of the Japanese intellectuals. In the last paragraph of her article she also alludes to these tendencies as being due to the "total divorce of the intellectuals from the sources of power."

While not negating Mrs. Finn's able argument in the main part of the paper, I should like to emphasize more strongly her final point. Four factors might be taken into consideration in this connection: First, the Japanese intellectuals are not highly thought of. From the dawn of history, the scholars have been forced to act as servants of a nonscholarly hierarchy. From the sixth century onward, the rapid adaptation of Japanese culture to Chinese and Western importations has been due to the work of her scholars for which the hierarchy, not the scholars, have received credit.

Moreover, the teachers suffer from a psychological ambiguity which is stronger in Japan than in any other society. Inside the schools they receive prestige and veneration reserved by Japanese students for their *sensei* (the masters). Outside schools their social position is relatively low, and the lack of attention paid them by their society is disturbing.

By contrast the vision of the social and economic status of the Soviet scholar is very enticing. The prestige and hearing accorded to Soviet intellectuals is greater than in most countries. This is very tempting to the neglected Japanese intellectuals.

Second, there are too many graduates. Japan has now an American system of education but not American economic opportunities. The result is the overproduction of intellectuals, which is likely to have an extremely unsettling effect on the stability of Japanese society. Dissatisfied intellectuals are notorious leaders of revolutions.

Third, the Japanese intellectuals are wary of the past. The recurrence of conservatism, after the experiences of the thirties, is alarming to them. They are prone to lose patience when confronted with the rearmament which favors the military, the economic situation which favors the *zaibatsu*, the constitutional democracy which favors officialdom, and the preservation of the Emperor which favors the aristocracy. They might be tempted to submit to a Communist dictatorship if it enforces "what is good for the people"—which "good," without such enforcement, they find hard to achieve.

And fourth, the intellectuals are worried about their country's economic problems. In view of the Hong Kong trade with China, they are hard put to abide by the economic policies that bar sorely needed markets to Japanese large-scale industry.

These four points illustrate why the Japanese intellectuals might be leaning toward communism. Only in part can American interference be pointed to as the main source of the trouble. The "idealized" version of democracy originally presented by American occupation forces suited the intellectuals well. They are unable to understand the realistic compromises which democracy has to make for the sake of efficiency and survival, and regard such as "betrayal." Most vocal left wing intellectuals have not traveled in the West and because of their leanings might now be barred from travel in this country. The result of such travels has often been noted in Japan to have had shattering effect upon

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preconceived anti-Western notions. More travel might contribute to the growth of the existing nucleus of truly moderate men.

GEORGE Z. F. BEREDAY
New York, New York

Foreign Policy Illusions

I read "Illusions of American Foreign Policy" [AS: Autumn, 1955] with great interest but feel the one important acknowledgment for improvement of our foreign policy was conspicuously absent.

Let us assume that the State Department is successful in pursuance of Mr. Lans's plan and we gain a foreign policy with no "illusions." What then? Too often we read of ideas for obtaining diplomatic success in one area or another with no regard for a future which, of necessity, must come.

At this point, we can remain only optimistic and, with a firm respect for reality, meet the less inspired Soviets more than halfway in hope that eventually they will assume true sincerity and that a world order will arise out of the present chaos.

EDWARD P. COHEN
University City, Missouri

The American Novel

After two careful readings of the FORUM article, "What's Wrong with the American Novel?" [AS: Autumn, 1955], I cannot attach a Q.E.D. The article is tedious, so painfully discursive that at times I harked back to the old ditty about the bull that rambled until "the butcher cut him down." The responses of the protagonists—there was not just one protagonist—occasionally were so inept that I shuddered. But, happily, on other occasions the remarks were critically apropos. It is anything but child's play to tackle offhand so controversial a subject as the status of the American novel, so some lapses may be pardoned. What astounded me was the texture of the conversational English employed by some of the speakers. Obviously I did not anticipate the accurate speech of purists, but did expect that editors, authors and publishing agents would do no violence to the mother tongue by splashing the columns with highly involved sentences and verbal fragmentations that obscured or mangled meanings. Especially I did not expect to encounter such expressions as: "The elder statesmen have been heard a great deal"; "I started to think about this a couple of days ago"; "For the novelist to be alive, you have to have some sort of an audience to keep him alive"; "Now, that sounds awfully vague, I guess"; "The novelist is likely to feel kind of daunted from the beginning"; "We have had quite a few novels"; "You had quite a number of people"; "I think it's a good novel, but it has been sort of finessed into a position"; "There seems to be quite a bit of prestige attached to being a novelist"; "I would sort of welcome a novelist today who would say . . ."; and "I know an awful lot of people who have done it." Others, no doubt, will disagree, but I derived not even a half-satisfying answer to the query pro or con. If discursiveness and raw rambling are to be the aim of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR FORUMS, then the article deserves the proverbial laurel.

LABAN LACY RICE
Winter Park, Florida

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